» Fabulous unrestored Brough Superior SS100 ridden
» 'I was done for hitting a copper' - Darren Dixon tells all
» Amazing one-off Harleys built by a BSB engineer

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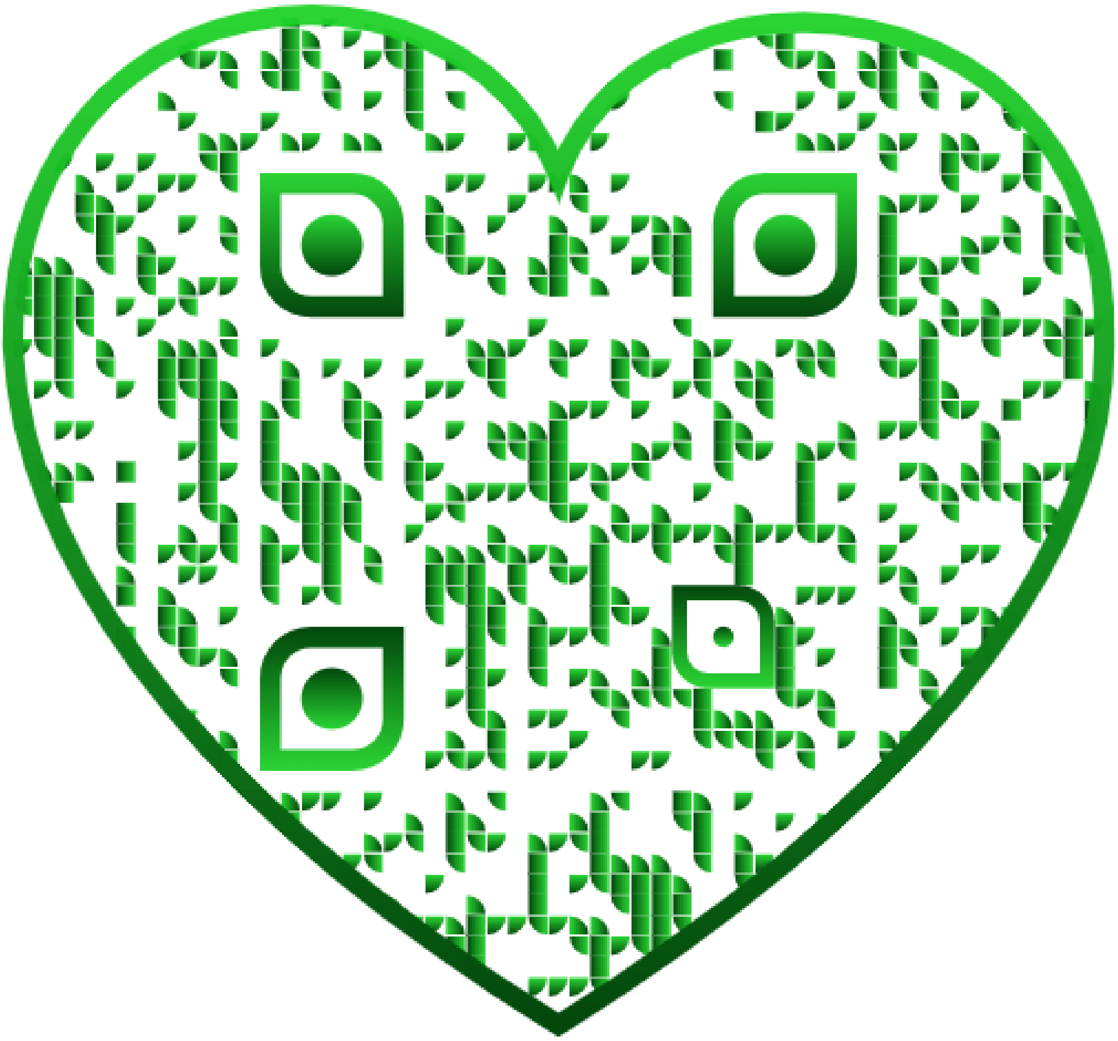

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December 2025 / #551

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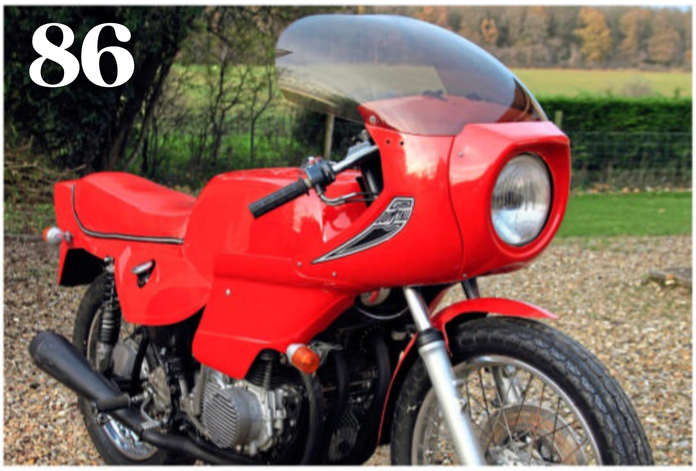
▼ Work to get this distinctive '70s rarity back on the road commences...

JOE LANDED

RICH NEWLAND



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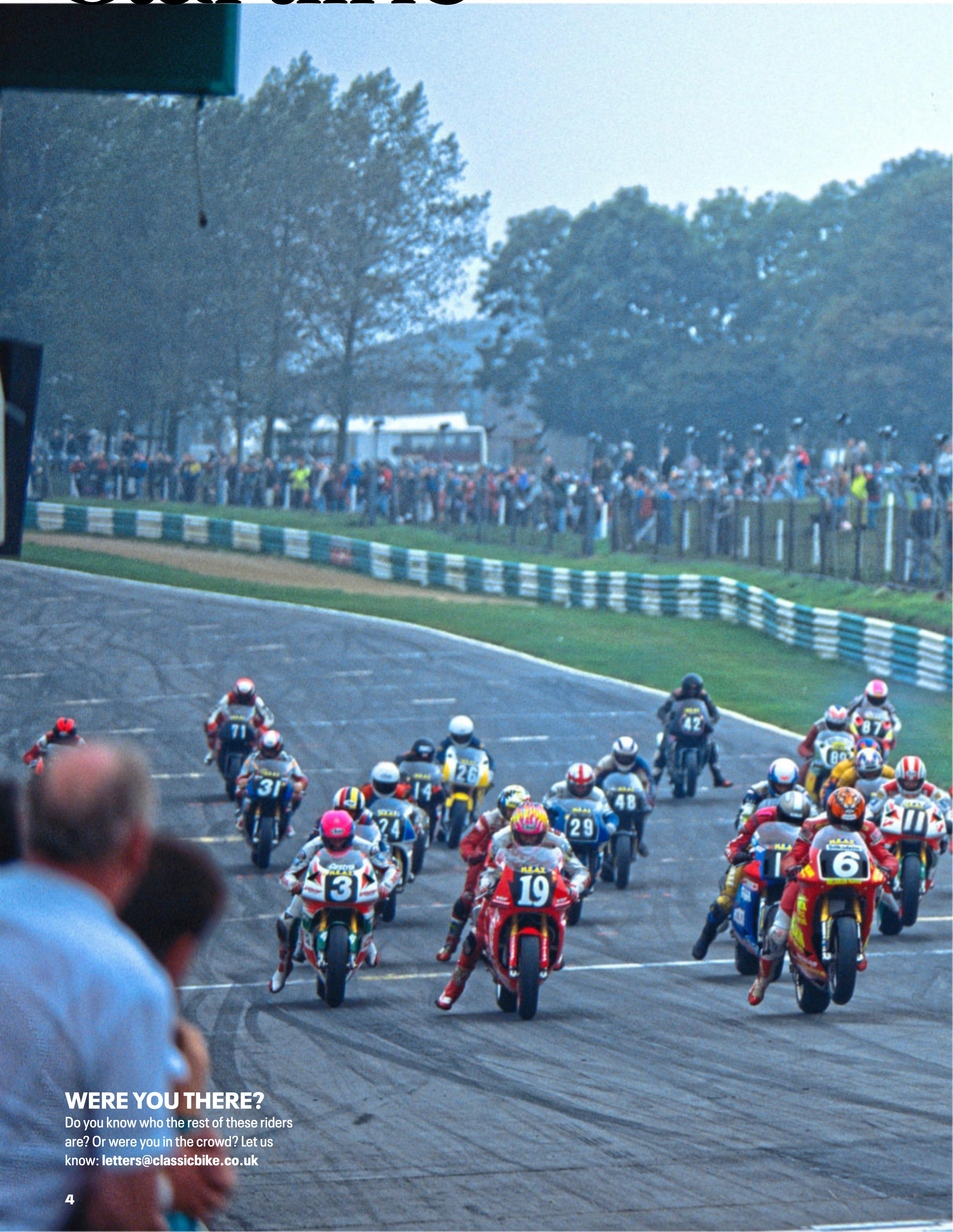


WERE YOU THERE?

Do you know who the rest of these riders are? Or were you in the crowd? Let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

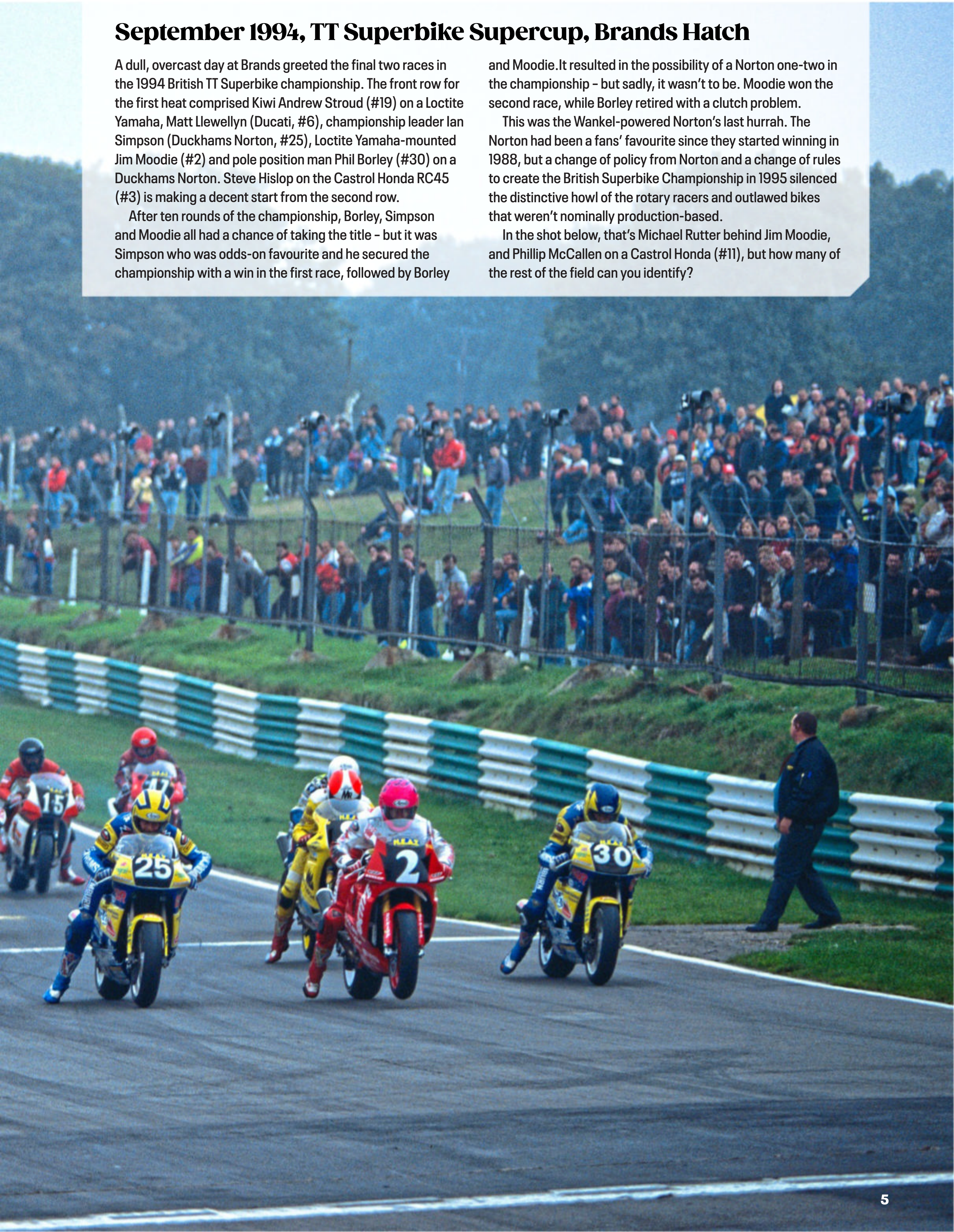
September 1994, TT Superbike Supercup, Brands Hatch

A dull, overcast day at Brands greeted the final two races in the 1994 British TT Superbike championship. The front row for the first heat comprised Kiwi Andrew Stroud (#19) on a Loctite Yamaha, Matt Llewellyn (Ducati, #6), championship leader Ian Simpson (Duckhams Norton, #25), Loctite Yamaha-mounted Jim Moodie (#2) and pole position man Phil Borley (#30) on a Duckhams Norton. Steve Hislop on the Castrol Honda RC45 (#3) is making a decent start from the second row.

After ten rounds of the championship, Borley, Simpson and Moodie all had a chance of taking the title – but it was Simpson who was odds-on favourite and he secured the championship with a win in the first race, followed by Borley and Moodie.It resulted in the possibility of a Norton one-two in the championship – but sadly, it wasn't to be. Moodie won the second race, while Borley retired with a clutch problem.

This was the Wankel-powered Norton's last hurrah. The Norton had been a fans' favourite since they started winning in 1988, but a change of policy from Norton and a change of rules to create the British Superbike Championship in 1995 silenced the distinctive howl of the rotary racers and outlawed bikes that weren't nominally production-based.

In the shot below, that's Michael Rutter behind Jim Moodie, and Phillip McCallen on a Castrol Honda (#11), but how many of the rest of the field can you identify?



BAUER

Letters

letters@classicbike.co.uk facebook.com/classicbikemagazine classicbike.co.uk

Classic Bike, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 6EA

Hello

Living in the north of Leicestershire means Donington Park is my local race circuit. Some great memories have been made there. I can recall seeing Barry Sheene in action in the early 1980s – my internal hard drive is a bit glitchy, but I think it was the '84 Transatlantic Trophy, all held at Donington. Later that decade my senses were abused by the JPS Nortons. Some mates and I camped at the '91 British GP where I got my T-shirt signed by Kevin Schwantz and Wayne Gardner, who was enjoying a paddock BBQ, and I'll never forget the roads being kerb-to-kerb bikes while riding to a 1990s WSB meeting. Or the whole crowd going 'Nooooo...' when Chris Walker's GSX-R blew up in the final BSB round of 2000. I did my first trackday there, too.

But perhaps the clearest recollection is of a Padgett's Suzuki RG500 lifting its front wheel on the dash from Redgate to Hollywood and carving through the field, ridden by a bloke in scruffy red and yellow leathers. It was plainly obvious that Darren Dixon had huge riding talent. But there was an underdog air because of the fact he'd come from racing sidecars, and was on an aging two-stroke in a grid full of new hot-tech superbikes. It was the 1988 British TT F1 championship and 'Dixie' won the title. He became a bit of a hero.

You'd expect a bloke who's raced everything from 125cc two-stroke to 750cc superbike and been a British and world champion – and done it on two and three wheels – to have some fabulous tales to tell. But when we sat down with Darren for a natter over lunch (sounds glamorous – it was pre-packaged butties in a blowy paddock awning) his amazing stories made our eyes wide and jaws slack. You can read them on page 36. Yes, he's definitely still a hero.

Plenty of other fabulous stories in this issue too, along with plenty of stand-out motorcycles. Our own Rick P does a bit of time travel and rides a wonderful unrestored Brough Superior SS100, and the first-year Kawasaki GPz750 revived by reader Trevor Slocombe could have been wheeled straight out of a 1982 showroom. Hugo Wilson has unearthed some glorious images telling the story of Australia's gritty Castrol 6-Hour races. Plus, we've got the latest news from the bike market along with all the workshop insight, guidance and project-bike antics that you can only find in *Classic Bike*.

I really hope you enjoy the issue – and if you do, now's the time to subscribe to *CB*. The offer on page 70 is a corker, even if we say so ourselves, saving you a decent wedge over newsstand prices. Go on, treat yourself – or maybe someone else...

Mike Armitage, Editor

Contributors in this issue

Mark Graham

Nobody looks at classic bikes or writes about them quite like MG. His pick of the market this month is unexpected and puts wallets in real danger.

Pages 10-11

Rick Parkington

When he's not grafting in his workshop, Rick's out finding and riding brilliant bikes – and this month we think he might have excelled himself.

Pages 44-50

Greg Moss

Greg travels the length of the UK, knocking on the doors of workshops and wading in with a camera. This month's Vincent specialist is great.

Pages 72-77

Lost in translation

G'day. Loved the article on the Dunstall Honda (November issue). 'Chipping away at the Dunny' has very different connotations here though, mate. Please, please, do not ever decide to print that phrase again!

John D, Sydney, Australia

PS The weather is turning glorious here in Sydney. Enjoy your shed time, lads and lasses.

Keep connected

Having spent hours and hours trying to find connector blocks to renew an ignition switch to no avail, I'd all but given up, having wasted time and money on eBay with Chinese suppliers masquerading as British companies.

At this point, I happened to come across an old edition of *Classic Bike*, in which I discovered an advert for Vehicle Wiring Products. When I called the number in the ad, Dave at VWP promptly identified the correct blocks (those fitted by a previous owner were not correct). After our conversation, for a very reasonable price I bought two sets – one set for another day – and a fitting kit.

The range of electrical components from Vehicle Wiring Products is impressive and I can confidently recommend VWP to all. Many thanks to *Classic Bike* – I've now placed a regular order for your magazine at the shop! I also had the added bonus of finding a great article on the Honda CX500 and its stablemates, of which I have a CX500C and a GL650D2E.

John Gerrard, Runcorn

PETER BAILLIE

Could Mike smuggle this past finance control?

TZR125
YAMAHA
YAMAHA
TZR
TZR
YAMAHA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Power to the people

Your feature on powervalves (November issue) brought back some two stroke-scented memories. When we were teenagers, the hottest bikes to have were the RD125 YPVS or, better still, the TZR125. They were the stuff of dreams - especially the beam-framed TZR, which to us looked like a GP bike.

Being skint students and apprentices, after we'd scrimped and saved to get a bike, we couldn't afford the servo whatsits to get the powervalves working and sneakily derestrict them. So the trick was to turn the valve into the 'full power' position and pin it in place, which unleashed the full Monty - apparently the TZR had 25 horsepower.

To an excitable 17-year-old, the difference was dramatic. The trick effectively doubled the horsepower. It also meant the two-stroke singles were even more gutless at low revs, although we didn't care as it was all about top speed. The trouble was that we all wanted more, so this meant dubious home-ported barrels, bored-out carburettors, fancy expansion-chamber exhausts and maybe an overbore (I seem to remember the hot tip was a Nikon piston that took the TZR up to 140cc). Of course, all our 'tuning' made the bikes peakier, revvier, harder to ride and inclined to jettison their piston rings via the massive exhaust port.

It also made them slower. With narrow powerbands and a constant appetite for revs, the bikes actually ended up with less performance most of the time. I remember one lad getting a restricted Kawasaki AR125 and us all taking the mickey out of him - before he out-dragged us all up the local hills.

Craig Todd, Derbyshire

A bit of youthful powervalve 'tuning' could double a TZR125's horsepower

MZ for Mike?

I can scratch Mike's itch to have an MZ TS 250/1 Super 5 again (September issue). This is mine (left), currently on Gumtree. Not perfect, but a great runner and priced accordingly. I'm a member of the MZ Riders Club and can have the bike 'bona fide'd' accordingly. Give me a shout if interested, for more details.

Peter Baillie

I suspect this would take some effort to get past domestic management. Mind you, at this time of year we have the possibility of operating under the cover of darkness... Mike

A note of optimism

I had to write and say how much I've enjoyed this October. At this time of year, with clouds gathering, it's easy to let the doom-and-gloom merchants of the classic bike world get you down – prices dropping, few new young recruits to the fold, worries about government legislation, etc. But visits to two events have proved to me that our hobby is still vibrant and alive.

At a visit to the Stafford Show earlier in the month, there was a lively feeling in the air. And attending Museum Live was a social highlight mixed with fascinating insights – especially from Rick Parkington's talk.

Henry Parshaw, Norfolk

Fabulous unrestored Brough Superior SS100 ridden
'I was done for hitting a copper' – Darren Dixon tells all
Amazing one-off Harleys built by a BSB engineer
Classic Bike
THE ORIGINAL
Super-rare first-year Kawasaki GPz750 transformed from a wreck
Plus PROJECT DUNSTALL CB750 • SUSPENSION WISDOM • HOW TO FIT A TACHO • YAM RD400 BUYING GUIDE • TRIUMPH 650 REBUILD

COVER IMAGE: JASON CRITCHELL

Issue #551 of *Classic Bike* was brought to you...

...to the sound of
Status Quo, *1+9+8+2*, UK No 1 when the GPz750 R1 arrived

...despite this distraction
Dixon and RG500, YouTube, Cadwell Motorcycle F1 1988

.. with this refreshment
Lacons Contrast Black IPA at the Red Lion, Cromer

...and thanks to
Joey's mechanic Ernie Coates for being a font of knowledge

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RICHARD PARKER

Richard Parker's Garelli Tiger Cross, post-refurbishment in 2017 – looking good and still surprising people

Cross purposes

A few comments about your Garelli Tiger Cross notes (Scrapbook, November issue). I got mine in September 1977 (pre-regstered, so it was unrestricted). It came with a road front tyre and knobbly rear (that's how they sold them – no idea why). The engine was Garelli's own and the Tiger Cross had a four-speed gearbox. The engine was part of their modular range, so the same basic engine could be used in all of their mopeds.

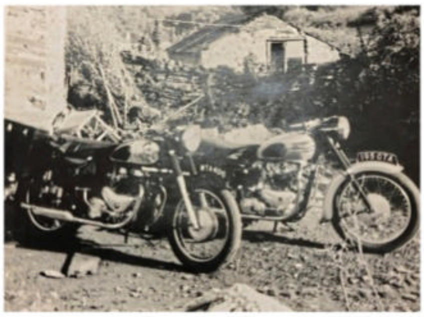
The comment about decent cycle parts also amused me – whilst dearer than an equivalent FSI-E, it was definitely built to a price. I soon changed the suspension to Gilera stuff, because as standard it was sprung only and felt like riding a pogo stick when on or off road. Bending the forks off road also didn't help.

The photo (above) shows the Garelli in my garden after I'd refurbished it in 2017. I used it for five years when I first got it, putting about 18,000 miles on it. It has now done 1200 miles since the rebuild, mainly on VMCC small-bike runs (it always surprises them how well it goes).

Richard Parker

PATE MCDOWELL

Will Pete be able to start his CB500T without a loom?


Anyone know where this Tiger 110 is now?

Tracking a Triumph

I recently found a photo of my uncle's Triumph Tiger 110 and his brother's Matchless (above). There are no details of the Matchless on the DVLA website, but the Triumph is taxed until next year. I would dearly love to find the owner of the bike. Would any *Classic Bike* readers be able to help or point me in the right direction? An email address would be great, so I could contact the owner or pass on my email address. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Jason Corlett

Looming issue

I'm looking for a bit of advice. I have rebuilt the engine of my 1976 Honda CB500T (left) and sorted the frame out. I am not sure about the condition of the loom. Is there any way to try and start the engine without the loom?

Pete McDowell

I think it should run straight off a 12v battery if it's still on points ignition. Check that it's negative earth, connect the battery negative to a good earth on *the engine and the positive to the ignition coil inputs. There should be two wires on each coil – one goes to the points' condensers, you need the other ones. You'll find wiring diagrams online. Rick P*

'The GT750 was one of the worst handling bikes I'd ridden'

Grappling a GT750

Maybe I'll rekindle some memories with my recall of a GT750 in the mid '70s. I was working as a mechanic at Gus Kuhn Motors Ltd in Stockwell, South London. I'd bought a 250 Ducati Mk3 new from Coburn and Hughes and had it for a year or so before I wanted something bigger. If I recall correctly, it was possible to buy a brand new GT750 for £999, which was my max budget at the time.

A friend of mine worked with a guy who had just purchased a brand new GT750 and knew I was keen on one. He agreed to let me have a ride on his, and brought it to my work one lunchtime. I promptly jumped on his GT750, flew off down the road and went round the bend we used to steam down on Commandos and R90Ss. I stopped at the top of the road, turned round, rode slowly rode back and gave him his bike back, thanking him.

The next week, I bought an ex-demo Ducati 860 for £999 from the Italian Centre in Wandsworth. The Suzuki was one of the worst handling bikes I had ridden. It certainly didn't have the 'benign handling' mentioned in the July issue's We Want It!

David Goldsmith

Cornering the Kettle didn't impress reader David

Send your letters to...

Share your opinions, stories, questions and memories by sending them to **letters@ classicbike.co.uk**

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Have you just bought a new project? Or have you finished a project, taken part in an event or just been for a ride? Do you have pictures of you or your friends from your biking past? Or can you identify the riders or a face in the crowd from the Startline image on page four? Please write and tell us

Startline

How many riders from the 1994 startline can you identify?

Letters

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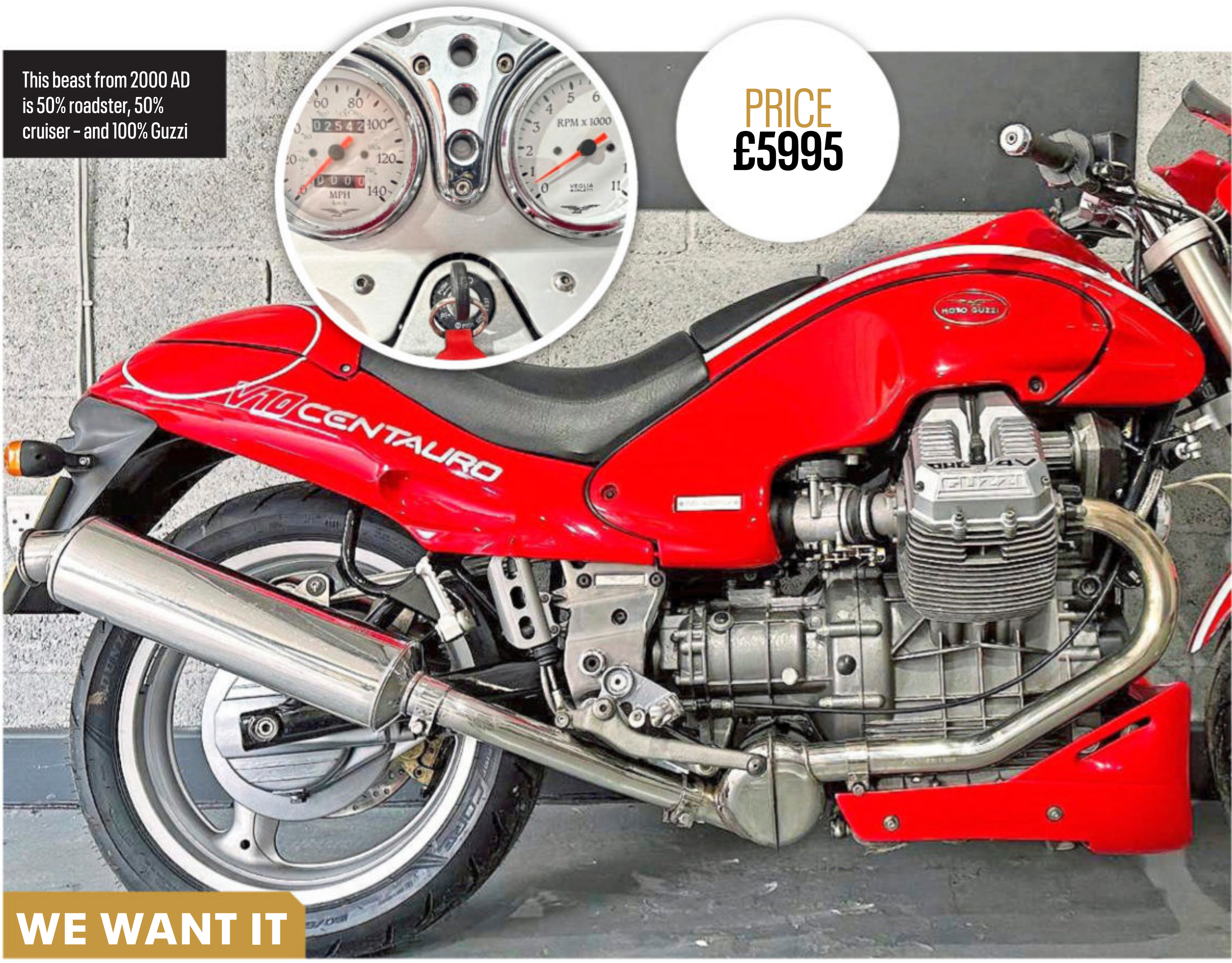

This beast from 2000 AD is 50% roadster, 50% cruiser – and 100% Guzzi

PRICE
£5995

WE WANT IT

Big-block bargain

Classic lines, robust engineering, a smear of modern useability and plenty of traditional Guzzi character. We can definitely see this **V10 Centauro Sport** delivering enjoyment...

The mid-1990s were an odd time for dear old Moto Guzzi. They had two eminently fit-for-purpose machines at both ends of the market: the Sport 1100s in many guises, and the California tourers for those who cared not for sport. With Suzuki Bandits and Kawasaki ZRXs selling by the boatload, they needed some form of naked stomper.

Enter the Centauro in 1996. It had to have enough go to compete with four-cylinder rivals, so it employed the 992cc Daytona RS engine with belt-driven dohc operating four valves per cylinder. Daytona cams (not RS items) gave it a good 90bhp with a rumbustious 72 lb ft of torque. Forged pistons and Carillo conrods from the Daytona RS worked the bottom end.

The frame was the steel rectangular-section spine of the latest sports models with 17in rubber holding metal bits off the ground. WP provided forks and shock, and up front 320mm floating discs and four-piston Brembo calipers stopped the 224kg (494 lb, wet) bruiser.

It went round corners well – both tight and more inviting – and was good for a largely academic sustained top whack of 130mph. It looked and sounded the part. And... nobody bought them.

Chief among sales negatives was the ten grand asking price when a Bandit 1200 was six, so it's easy to see why this exotic device, named after a creature of mythology, fell flat.

And yet, despite a commentator of the time cruelly yet amusingly describing the riding position as 'Sitting on an upturned canoe', it is now a much more alluring item. And even rarer, if that excites you.

The machine up for sale is a final-year-

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Rescued, revived and ridden

of-production Centauro Sport from 2000 AD. Finished in Italian Racing Red (the other option was British Racing Green), it's a UK bike with a mere 2601 miles on the tumblers. It was dry stored in 2003 and has now been fully recommissioned with new tyres, cambelts, wheel bearings, brake pads, filters and all fluids.

Mark Johnson of vendors Moto Strada in Skipton, Yorks has fully shaken it down after the considerable revival work and describes the Centauro thus: "It grows on you the more you ride it. I'm a big fan of Guzzis and in a 'normal' market this would be an £8500 bike."

At £5995 this unusual, engaging offering is something of a bargain when a machine like a new ersatz BSA Gold Star is roughly the same money. Anyone with a penchant for big-block Guzzis from the revival-era would do well to see if a test ride doesn't loosen some purse strings.

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER

'If I had £10,000...'

Jeff Turner is Marketing Manager for Yamaha and was a key member of endurance legends Team *Bike* in the '80s. Here's how he'd blow a £10k gift

Overseas track outings

"I've got a Yamaha R1 track bike, so the bulk of this fictitious ten grand would go on taking it to all the tracks I never properly got to experience with Team *Bike*. Yes, you'd be there at places like Spa, Hockenheim and Jarama, but you'd be working in a concrete box of a pit garage and rarely see the track.

"You'd either be head-down repairing a crashed bike or in the back of a pick-up retrieving the machine you'd just rebuilt. For example,I only know the 170mph double-left of Blanchimont at Spa after rider Paul Lewis crashed there and described how he hit a seagull flat out at three in the morning – when most self-respecting gulls would be fast asleep.

"Parts of the old 4.2-mile Hockenheim track would be a must, although you'd need a dirt bike to negotiate them now. And for Montjuic Park you'd have to hire a scooter, because it's public roads. So even kipping in the van, I'd be looking at a total layout of seven or eight grand. Mugello, I know, is somewhere around £400 for a trackday... so the money would soon disappear."

£8000

A swanky set of one-piece leathers

"I'd treat myself to a new set of leathers – RS Taichi would be my go-to brand. Assuming I could get to Osaka, I'd have them made-to-measure. And yes, if I did a drastically-reduced European track schedule I might even have enough money to go there – and then do a trackday at Suzuka, too.

"Those RS Taichi suits always look like they've been made from the hides of Wagyu beef cattle – so unblemished, and then beautifully stitched together. That's maybe £1500, I'd guess..."

£1500

Team *Bike* knees-up

"There's only going to be loose change left now. No question – I'd put it behind a bar for the remaining members of Team *Bike*. The 1980s were such a crest of a tech wave – and we blagged our way along it. That decade began with 35mm forks, steel frames, twin shocks and ended with alloy beam frames, single-sided swingarms and upside-down forks. It was like a Klondike gold rush of technology. Great days."

£500

12 bikes you can buy

Gez Kane trawls the bikes for sale to give you his pick from auctions, private sales and specialist classic dealers – your perfect classic might just be here...

£2995

1980 Honda XR200

Rare four-stroke that became one of the go-to machines for anyone looking for a serious lightweight trail bike in the '80s. Survivors are hard to find in this condition. Renovated in 2009 and only light road use since then.

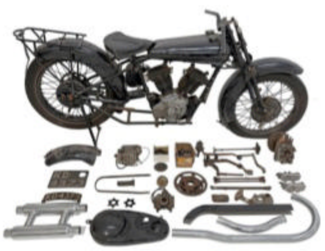
Private sale 07395 885932

£3750

1983 Honda CX500C

The popularity of the CX is rising - and this one is top-notch. A German-market C model, with twin-spark ignition and twin-piston front brake calipers. Unrestored and UK registered with mph speedo and UK headlight.

classicsuperbikes.co.uk



£20,000-30,000

1929 Brough Superior Overhead 680

Fancy a project? Well documented and in the same family since the '60s. Frame, engine and tank are original, gearbox is correct type. Dismantled and dry stored for some time.

bonhams.com

£14,950

1979 Laverda Jota

A matching numbers machine, owned for the past 40 years and described as being in excellent condition. Fully restored with over £10k spent. Electrical and ignition systems renewed by Rupe's Rewires. Ready to ride.

Private sale 07856 095658

£9995

1977 Moto Guzzi Le Mans MkI

The most desirable of Le Mans models, this is an Italian import brought over here in 2016. Restored to a very good standard in the UK, it had additional work carried out in 2024/2025. Runs as good as it looks.

anthonygodin.co.uk

£800-1200

1953 Laverda MT75 Sport

The 1952 MT (Milano-Taranto) was successful in Italian long-distance road races. For 1953, it was updated with telescopic forks, a twinshock rear and new duplex frame. Restored in 2010, but has no documents.

bonhams.com

£2500

1980 BMW R100RS

This looks like splendid value. Just four owners from new, in unrestored but obviously very well cared-for condition and only 36,000 miles. Genuine BMW panniers too. Unused for the past nine years.

Private sale 07810 595950

Classic Bikes Ltd.
Tel 01630 657156

£7995

1998 Yamaha YZF-R1

The first-year R1 is a landmark bike that still feels epic today, and starting to increase in value. This UK-market model is in original condition, with full history. In exceptional cosmetic order, it runs and rides superbly.

classicbikes.co.uk

£2000-3000

1968 Bridgestone 175 Dual Twin

From the Robert Lusk collection this is an example of Bridgestone's smallest twin, with old logbook and V5C. Started regularly, but will need work to get back on the road.

bonhams.com

£4500

1969 BSA A65 Lightning

Matching-numbers bike with a full engine rebuild – including end feed, roller-bearing crank conversion – 9500 miles ago. Same owner for the last 20 years, very good cosmetically and has electronic ignition.
Private sale 01766 770648

£2750

1934 New Imperial Model 23 Unit Minor

An affordable introduction to pre-war motorcycling – a 150cc bike for cheap road tax in its day. Useable condition and an easy bike to learn the art of hand gearchange.
andybuysbikes.com

£15,000-20,000

1974 Ducati 750SS

Damaged by a fire where it was stored, this is Charlie Sanby's 1974-1975 Production TT mount. It's hoped that the damage is fairly superficial, although the buyer would have to establish this to their own satisfaction.
bonhams.com

Quick guide

AMC big singles

AJS and Matchless Owners Club president **Andrew Stevens** explains why you need an AMC heavyweight single throbbing its way into your life

Why it's desirable

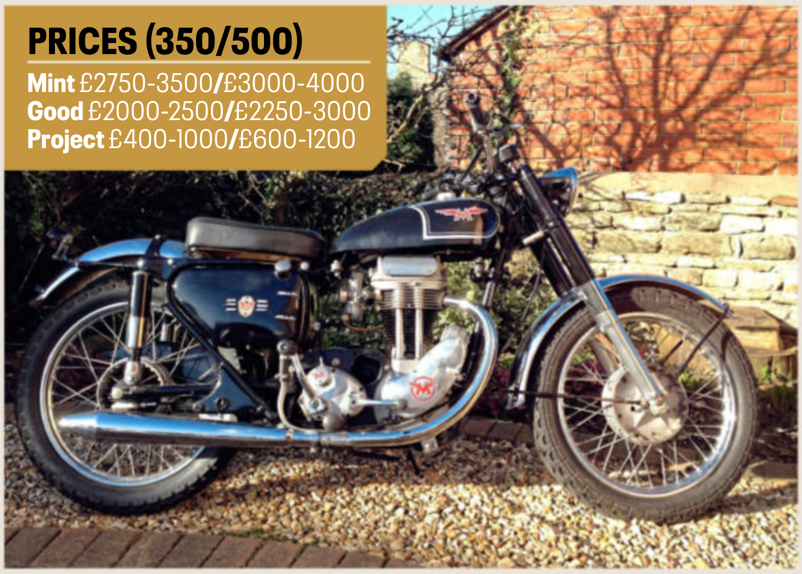
AMC heavyweight singles are awesome – and probably all the bike you'll ever need. A well maintained and set-up machine is a delight. It will start easily and lope along reliably and dependably. They get under your skin and put a huge smile on your face. The 350 is under-stressed and friendly, but the extra punch of the 500 is probably worth it for longer-distance riders. If you're looking for an easy-to-handle machine to ride on B-roads, look no further.

What to look for

The build quality of AMC motorcycles – AJS and Matchless – is excellent. The club knows of examples that have covered 100,000 miles which were found have little discernible wear. Look out for evidence of poor maintenance and bodging. A good one will manifest in easy cold and hot starting, steady tickover and clean acceleration. Bikes with history, especially if known to the club, are probably the safest bet. There's plenty of choice – especially for 350s.

PRICES (350/500)

Mint £2750-3500**/**£3000-4000
Good £2000-2500**/**£2250-3000
Project £400-1000**/**£600-1200



GARY PINCHIN

How much to pay

Now is a great time to buy. Prices for classic motorcycles have been falling over the last few years, and tidy 350s have changed hands for around £2000. Decent, genuine competition models that would have made £6000 a few years ago, can now be found from £4000. Military machines, especially with campaign history, remain in demand and can command sums similar to those achieved by competition machines. 'Works' bikes or highly original unrestored examples will make a little more, but are few and far between.

Join the club

The AJS & Matchless Owners Club has over 3000 members worldwide and is one of the most active single-marque clubs in the UK. There are lively local sections, three club rallies a year (the National Jampot, the International and the 'back to basics' Alternative), a monthly journal – Jampot – and an online forum where you can access technical advice. Oh, and a dating and registration service (using factory records), a fantastic spares scheme and a vast archive, both online and at the Club HQ.
jampot.com

12 bikes that sold

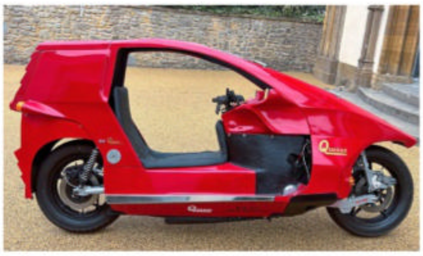
From a quarter-million-pound-plus project bike to a cheap and cheerful twinshock trials iron for well under a grand, **Gez Kane** lifts the lid on recent standout sales and prices

£620

1962 BSA C15

This little Beeza has been in one family ownership since new and has never been restored. It looks complete and original and the odometer shows 38,143 miles – which may be genuine. A nice little starter project.

charterhouse-bikes.com



£9000

1980 Quasar MkII

MkII version of the feet-forward oddity with the Suzuki GS850 engine. It's the last of designer Malcolm Newell's 22 machines, completed after his death by Mike Ryan. Imagine rocking up to the pub on (in?) this.

charterhouse-bikes.com

£56,580

Circa 1930 Henderson KJ Streamline Four

The KJ (along with the slightly more powerful KL) represents the ultimate development of the American four. Beautifully restored, this bike was imported from the USA in 2002.

bonhams.com

£62,100

1992 Honda NR750

The most exotic road bike ever? The 32-valve oval-piston V4 is utterly luxurious and feels like nothing else. This Swiss-market version of the rarity, owned since 2002, is in superb condition with just 1408km on the odometer.

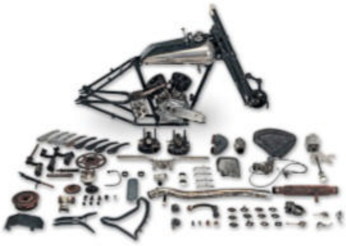
bonhams.com

£21,275

1974 Kawasaki H2

This superb triple proves the most in-demand models still make strong money. A US import and former Best in Show winner at Stafford, expertly restored by Triples Club member Kenny Crowdy, it has a recent new exhaust.

bonhams.com



£264,500

1925 Brough Superior SS100 sand racer project

This is no ordinary box of bits. It was formerly campaigned by renowned sand and road racer CF Edwards and is the first pre-Alpine Grand Sport SS100 to be offered at auction.

bonhams.com

£1400

1979 Malaguti Cavalcone

Offered without reserve, this rare little bike was in a private collection. Said to ride and run well, it looks pretty original and complete. Great fun for moped and lightweight runs – and something a little different.

manorparkclassics.com

£3729

1980 Suzuki GT250 X7

Good Japanese 250s continue to make solid prices. Imported in 2019 and restored by a previous owner, this example is ready to ride. An engine rebuild and pro respray were part of the resto and it's been regularly ridden.

ebay.co.uk

£5790

1939 BSA M20

Military motorcycles are always in demand – and this BSA looks complete and largely original. Repatriated from Italy (where it was left after the war) and last ridden 18 months ago, it will require a good going-over.

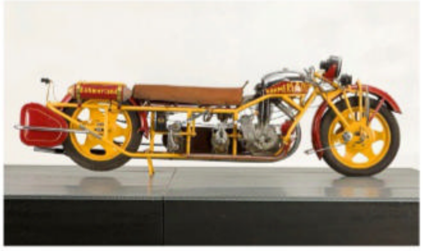
ebay.co.uk

£14,950

1978 Moto Guzzi Le Mans

One of the last of the iconic MkI models, this machine has been very well looked after. Fitted with rearset footrests and Lafranconi competition silencers. Owned by the vendor since 2016, it looks ready to jump on and ride.

bonhams.com



£63,250

1937 Bohmerland Langtouren

This crazy Czech-built single has the longest wheelbase of any production motorcycle. Previously part of the Pamplona collection, it would certainly turn heads if you rolled up to your local VMCC run. Three-up, obviously.

bonhams.com

£750

1980 Montesa 349

Looks good value for a venture into twinshock trials. Described as being in good running order, it looks fairly original apart from an aftermarket silencer. Not UK registered, but appears ready to hop on and start having fun.

manorparkclassics.com

Price check

Kawasaki Zeds

Air-cooled Z-series Kawasaki fours have always managed to stir the soul. Here's how much you might have to shell out to get yours stirred...

Bike	Description	Winning bid	Auctioneer
1974 Z1-A	New and unused with just 2.6 'push' miles	£61,489	Mecum
1973 Z1	Ex-Rick Brett, immaculate restored US model	£11,000	Iconic
Circa 1974 Z1-A	Import, history unknown, very good condition	£9315	Bonhams
1974 Z1-A	Full restoration/engine rebuild 3000 miles ago	£8950	eBay
1974 Z1-A	Import UK registered in 2017, earlier resto, original	£8740	H&H
1977 Z900 A4	US import, fully restored in 2018, running & riding	£8625	Iconic
1976 KZ900	US import, UK registered, earlier resto, VGC	£7800	eBay
1976 Z900 A4	Restored in 2004, full engine rebuild, VGC	£7600	eBay
1976 Z900	Ex-collection displayed import, excellent condition	£6335	Bonhams
1985 Z1100R	Tidy, but some non-standard parts, oil leak	£6200	eBay
1983 Z1000 R2	Excellent original condition, oil pressure issue	£5750	eBay
1980 KZ650 F1	Superb condition, runs faultlessly	£4995	eBay
1979 Z650B	Very clean, original and running well	£4000	eBay
1978 KZ650B	Low-mileage import, running well	£3600	Charterhouse
1978 KZ1000B Ltd	US custom model, running project, unregistered	£3500	eBay
1977 Z1000 A1	Import, stored 10 years, fair condition	£3000	eBay
1983 Z1000 R2	Scruffy project, some frame damage	£2500	eBay
1981 Z1000 CSR	US custom model, good condition, running well	£2100	eBay
1986 KZ1000P	Ex-California Police model, project bike	£2051	eBay

'How much?' Gez Kane on classic values

An as-new Z1 at Mecum's Monterey sale a few months ago fetched a staggering £61,489. Is it a sign that some classic bike values are back on the rise?

I'm not so sure. Neither is Mark Bryan of Iconic Auctioneers who sold a 1973 ex-Rick Brett machine for £11,000 at around the same time. "The US market is very different to the UK scene," he ventures. "Unused 'as new' machines are something of a law unto themselves, too. I'd say our bike sold for about the going rate for a really good, early Z1." I'd agree. I think the days of the £20,000 Z1 have gone for the time being.

There are plenty of more affordable Zeds around, too. I reckon £6k-7.5k would get you a lovely Z900, while Z650s at £3k-4k look good value, too.

The *Classic Bike* auction diary

December 5
Manor Park Classics sale, Ikon House, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire.
manorparkclassics.com

December 5-15
Bonhams online classic motorcycle sale.
bonhams.com

December 6
WB and Sons classic car and bike sale, Killingworth, Newcastle upon Tyne.
wbandsons.com

December 10
Brightwells online classic car and motorcycle sale.
brightwells.com

December 12
Ewbank's Winter sale, Burnt Common Auction Rooms, Woking, Surrey.
ewbanksauctions.co.uk

January 28-31
Mecum Las Vegas Sale, South Point Hotel & Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.
Mecum.com

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- ✓ Grace Webb presents 'Expert Lab'
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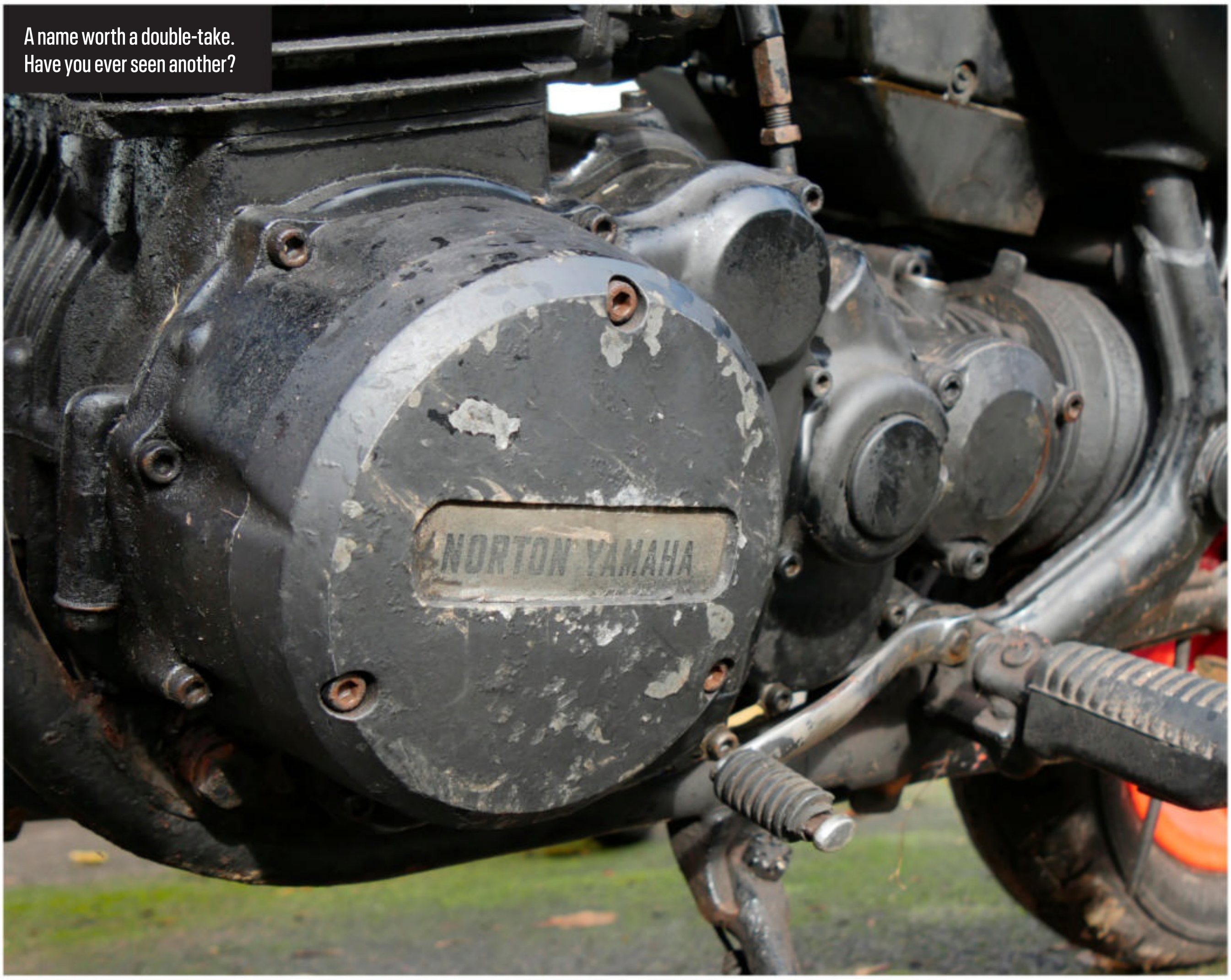


A name worth a double-take. Have you ever seen another?

Rare police bike found

Yes, that does say 'Norton Yamaha' – and you can own this rare joint-factory production

It looks like a Yamaha XS750 because that's what it is. But closer inspection reveals unusual features. It has drilled front brake discs and a fork brace. And, perhaps most telling, it says 'Norton Yamaha' on the engine covers.

The bike was found by *CB* reader Rob Wild, who acquired it without realising what it was. "I bought a restored Yamaha XS400 that seized within about 30 miles, and in looking for parts I stumbled across three XS750s on eBay," he says. "I bid without looking at them and won the auction – then noticed this was a Norton Yamaha. It was a new one on me."

Introduced in 1969, the Norton Interpol had proved popular with police forces. Based on the Commando and fitted with fairing, panniers, top box, radio and extra lights, it was a common sight on UK roads. Financial woe meant NVT built the last Commandos in autumn 1977, so they looked at other ways of retaining police sales. They reached an agreement to buy XS750s from Yamaha, attach all the Interpol's police-specific gubbins and badge it as a Norton Yamaha. 'Within days of the announcement of the new machine, many of Britian's police forces were in touch with NVT regarding supply,' claimed Yamaha's own *Circuit* publication in early 1978. NVT would also assemble Yamaha's HL500 motocross bike, in a limited run of 200 for European dealers.

Imagine it white, with a fairing, blue lights...

Registered on March 1, 1978, Rob's bike has the name on the engine, along with the drilled discs and fork brace (supplied in the box of bits) highlighted in a period magazine article unearthed during his research. NVT are thought to have made up to 50 of these bikes, but we've never seen another. If you know more, let us know – and if you fancy buying and restoring an extremely rare police bike, contact Rob on 07888 826176.

What's new

750SS cracks £100,000

This 1974 750SS sold for £103,500 at the recent Bonhams sale at the Stafford Show. It's £40k down on a similar 750SS that sold in 2024, but that had a far more complete history. Little is known of this one before '84, when it came to the UK and was later restored by Made in Italy Motorcycles.

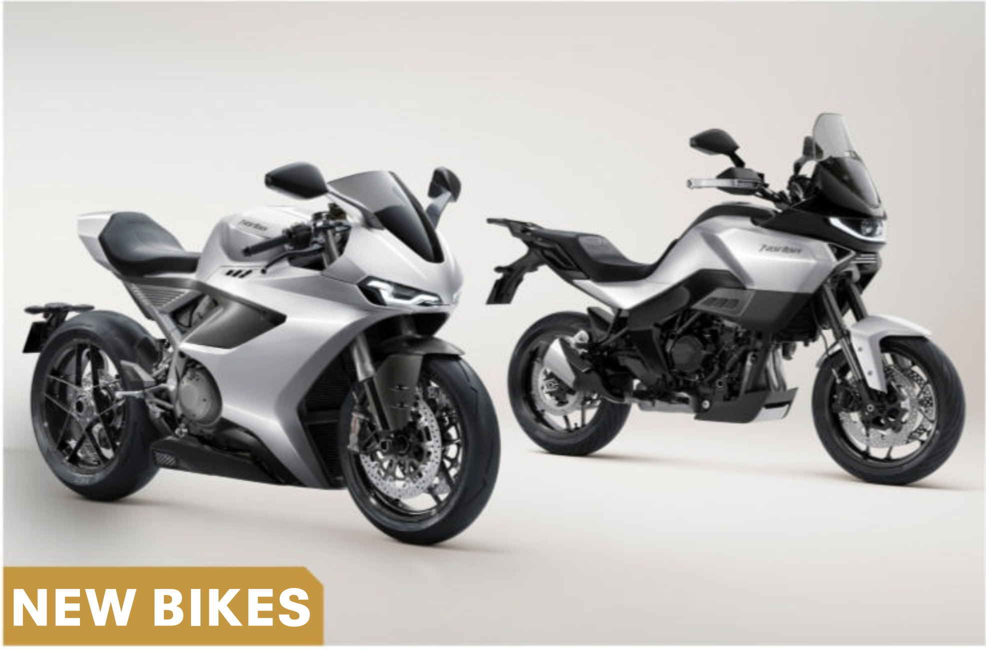
BONHAMS

Bullet is bigger than ever

Royal Enfield have a new Bullet, using the 648cc, 46bhp parallel twin from the Interceptor. It mirrors the style of the 350 Bullet, with a tubular steel spine frame, hand-painted details and metal body. All the nods to the original 350s and 500s mean the Bullet 650 weighs 243kg - 25kg more than the Interceptor. It will cost £6749.

Classic TT expands in '26

Next year's Classic TT will include a Junior 600 race for bikes such as Honda CBR600Fs and Kawasaki ZX-6Rs. They'll qualify for the Senior Classic TT too, alongside Formula One and Lightweight bikes. There'll also be a new Ultra Lightweight, bringing back 125cc two-strokes. iomttraces.com


NORTON

NEW BIKES

Cheerio Commando

Norton's flash new range has no room for air-cooled twins

Norton has revealed its new range of machines, featuring two Atlas and Manx models – but those names are the only links with the company's glorious past. The styling and technology – and the new logo – are all wilfully modern.

"Recognise the past, but don't be harnessed by it," says Professor Gerry McGovern, Norton's chief creative advisor and architect of numerous Land Rover and Jaguar redesigns.

"Norton has always had this essence of modernity," he adds. "My favourite's the 1959 Manx. They were very innovative, very modern, never looking back. That's what this design strategy was all about. When you look at the bikes together, the first thing that strikes you is the sense of modernity. Some people may look at them and think: 'Maybe they're too modern'. Great design can often be polarising."

The bikes themselves look like competent – possibly excellent – modern fare. The Manx R is a 1200cc, 206bhp V4 superbike with semi-active suspension and all the electronic trimmings. The Manx is the same thing, but with high bars. Norton say the engines are all new, rather than modified versions of the old V4SV, though they do share the same bore and stroke...

Then there's a pair of Atlas 585cc parallel twin middleweights: a GT version with 17in front wheel, and the basic Atlas with a 19-incher. Both have the full range of Norton's new electronics. You can read more about the new Nortons and their development in the latest issue of *CB*'s sister title *Bike*. Tell us what you think of the new range – and lack of Commando. Email us: letters@classicbike.co.uk

£73,700 for an XT500!

Yes, it's in a crate and looks immaculate. Yes, the XT500 is a fantastic motorcycle and a bona fide classic. But £73,700 for a mass-produced Japanese trail bike? It isn't even one of the first made – the model was launched 1976 and this one is thought to have been built in 1986 before being registered for the road in France in September 1988. It sold for €84,000 at the latest Sotheby's auction in Germany.

RM SOTHEBY'S

As new as you'll get - but £73,700 still seems salty

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We are confident the kit will transform the riding experience with a one-touch starting and improved transmission.

The high-quality Denso® starter motor is negative polarity so a regulator/rectifier will be needed for +positive earth situations.

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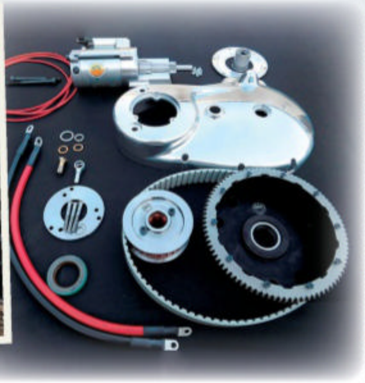

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*(*Contents of the kits vary according to the model of the motorcycle. Please note the batteries are not included).*

Libertalia Oilskin Tool Roll & Tools

£179.50

Includes all the tools you need to make roadside repairs.

Tool Set: Rear wheel spanner, Suspension spanner, Tappet spanner, Spark plug wrench, Screwdriver with two Phillips heads and two flat heads, 5 Hex keys, Tyre pressure gauge & 4 spanners ⅜, 7⁄16, ½, 9⁄16

T140 CON ROD BOLTS

£79.50 Set of 4

Also suitable for: Triumph T100, Daytona 500cc unit twin-cylinder, Triumph TR25W Trophy 250cc & BSA B25 Starfire 250cc single-cylinder models too.

Machined from nickel chromium molybdenum hardened and tempered as EN24T alloy steel. EN24T steel readily combines a good high tensile steel strength of 850/1000 N/mm^2 with shock resistance, ductility and wear resistance. The threads are cut to a very fine tolerance to ensure a perfect fit with the nuts supplied.

These kits have been designed, developed and manufactured in the U.K. by Ark Racing® Limited a company recognised globally for its starting solutions for the motorsport industry. All the components are made of high-grade materials and to a high standard.

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**Postage & prices are subject to change. E&OE.*

The Kettle Club injected some fun into proceedings with a wigged-out '70s theme that deservedly won them Best Club Stand

Stafford Show

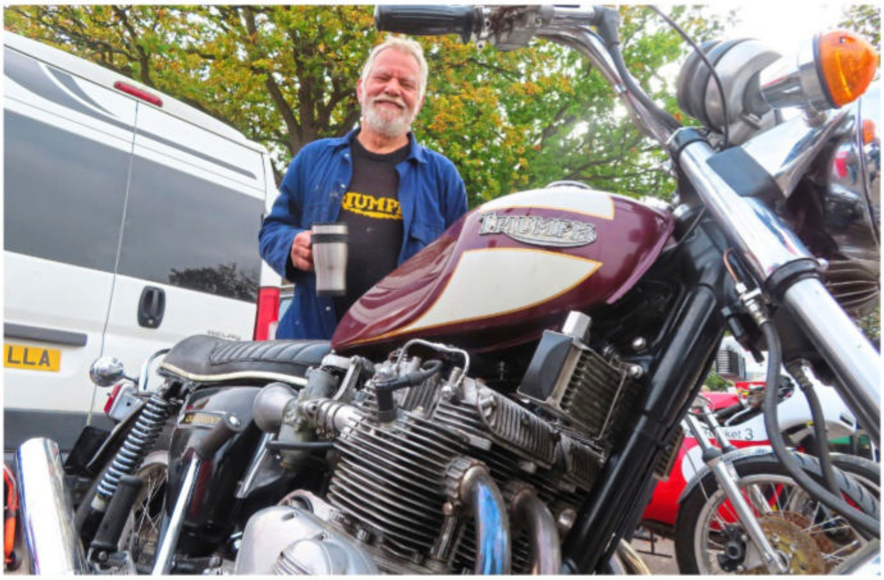
Covering the weekend of October 11-12, *CB* headed along to see the fresh restorations and lovingly prepared exhibits, dig out unusual bikes and fuss around the stands

The first full-scale show for classic bikes at Manchester's Belle Vue in 1980 reflected the fast-growing scene. Since those days, it's become twice yearly and moved to Stafford County Showground.

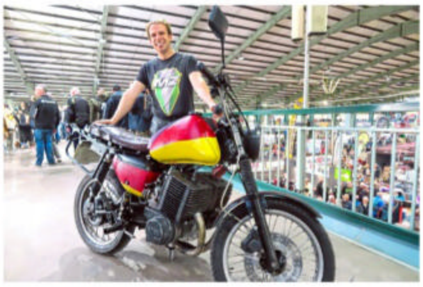
Traditionally, the October show has been for later classics, but the healthy crossover with the April event meant it could be hard to tell them apart. This year, under new management, the October show seemed to find its proper footing with a great mix of '70s, '80s and '90s bikes – backed by just enough older British and vintage machines. This year's 'Best in Show' was Paul Cann's 1967 Kawasaki Avenger.

Covid lockdowns devastated some events and this Stafford still felt less crowded than in pre-pandemic times. However, there was definitely an upbeat feel in the air, suggesting the show – and the scene in general – is building up its strength again.

Despite being probably the biggest name in classic Honda parts, Dave Silver says his stand at the show was still finding new customers who hadn't heard about him before. Dave also likes to spend time in the auction, where the current dip in prices is providing interesting bikes at more reasonable money than for the last decade.

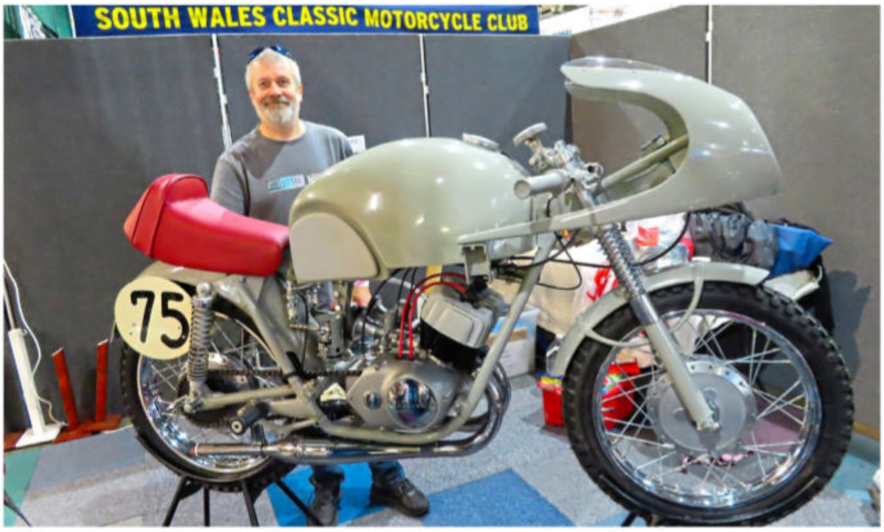


George Pooley reckons his four-cylinder Triumph Quadrant, which we spotted in the race paddock, is the bike Triumph should have made. George created his own interpretation of the 1000cc factory prototype version of the Trident, welding together parts cut from two engines and machining the crank from a massive chunk of steel. "I've ridden it round most of the race tracks in the country," he grins.



Tom Scott's MZ needs a double-take or you'd easily miss the fact that it's got two engines side by side. "MZ made a prototype twin, but didn't go ahead with it," says Tom, "As I had a spare engine I decided to build one. The left-side engine is complete, with a gear coupling to the right crank. It's no faster than a standard 250, but there's much more midrange."

"This is all a new experience for me!" laughs Paul Lippitt. "I'm trying to clear out my dad's stuff; I think nearly all the parts are Velocette but with no real idea of prices… I'm not sure I got it right – a few buyers seem a bit too happy to pay what I ask. But overall, I've enjoyed the weekend."


SOUTH WALES CLASSIC MOTORCYCLE CLUB
75

Yamaha's first race success was a 1-2-3 victory over Honda on the volcanic Mount Asama circuit in 1957 – and Richard Tracey believes his YDA250 was probably the winner. The YDA was later raced by Cal Rayborn in the States – and that's where Richard obtained the engine to match the chassis he'd already found. He then sourced or made the other missing parts. The knobbly tyres? For navigating the circuit's ash surface.

WORDS& PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

Diary dates…

November 23 Huddersfield Retro Jumble
Not a bike-specific gathering, but expect plenty of bike parts and tools in among the books, clothes and memorabilia at this long-established gathering. All inside the Old Market Building, a grade two-listed structure in Huddersfield. Stalls are £20 if you have something to shift. Entry is £3.
phoenixfairs.jimdo.com

December 6 Kempton Classic Show & Autojumble
Your last chance to pop long to the racecourse for one of the many Kempton jumbles that run every year, with an off-road and racing show all part of the deal. Hunt out that missing whatsit for your winter project, gawp at fine machinery, and say things like: 'Ooh, doesn't it get dark early now'.
kemptonautojumble.co.uk

10 Brit Bike Night, Ace Cafe
The famous venue on London's North Circular has a night specifically for British machines, with the Royal Enfield and Triumph owners' clubs, plus the BMF and more. Enjoy a mix of show-ready metal, gritty daily riders, rock 'n' roll in your eardrums and an Ace Burger Special in your belly.
london.acecafe.com

17 *Classic Bike* 1976 anniversary issue
Our 50th anniversary celebration issues have become an annual treat. The bumper-size 1976 special goes on sale on December 17, with a host of amazing first-person tales, fabulous bikes and events, exclusive content and untold tales. Subscribers should get it a day or two before (if you're not one, sign up and save a few quid, p70).
greatmagazines.co.uk/classicbike

26 Plum Pudding Races
Drag yourself off the sofa on Boxing Day for some refreshing bike racing (and some cars too). There'll be plenty of classics mingled in with modern machinery, and probably some fancy dress silliness too. It's £13 on the gate (£11 advance) and under 14s are free.
malloryparkcircuit.com

Rescued, revived & ridden

The classic bikes that you have found, restored or just taken for a ride

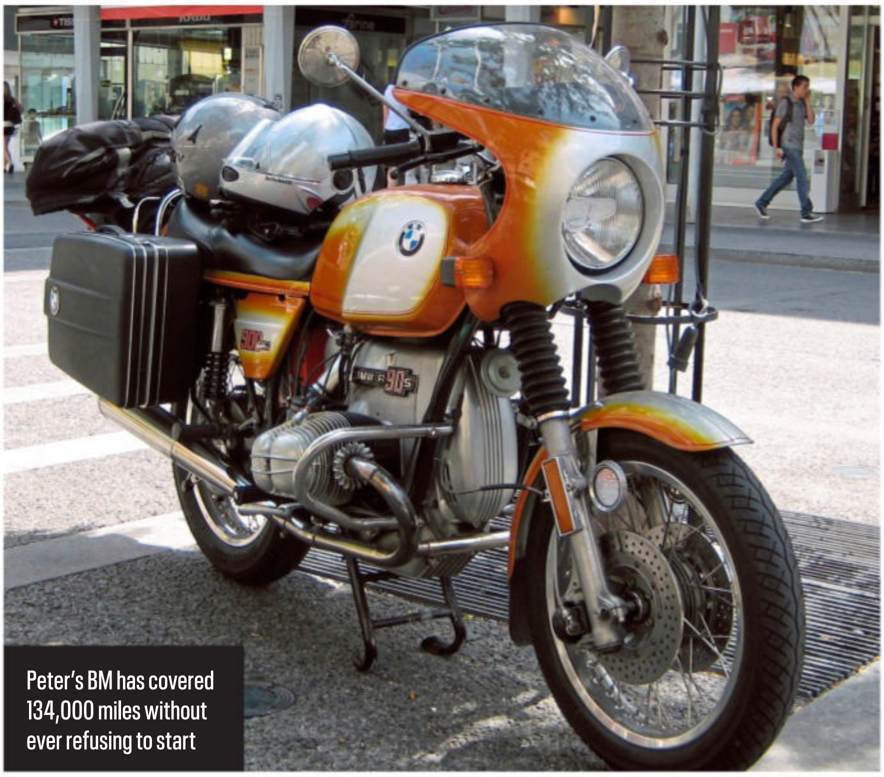
RIDDEN

Well-roamed R90

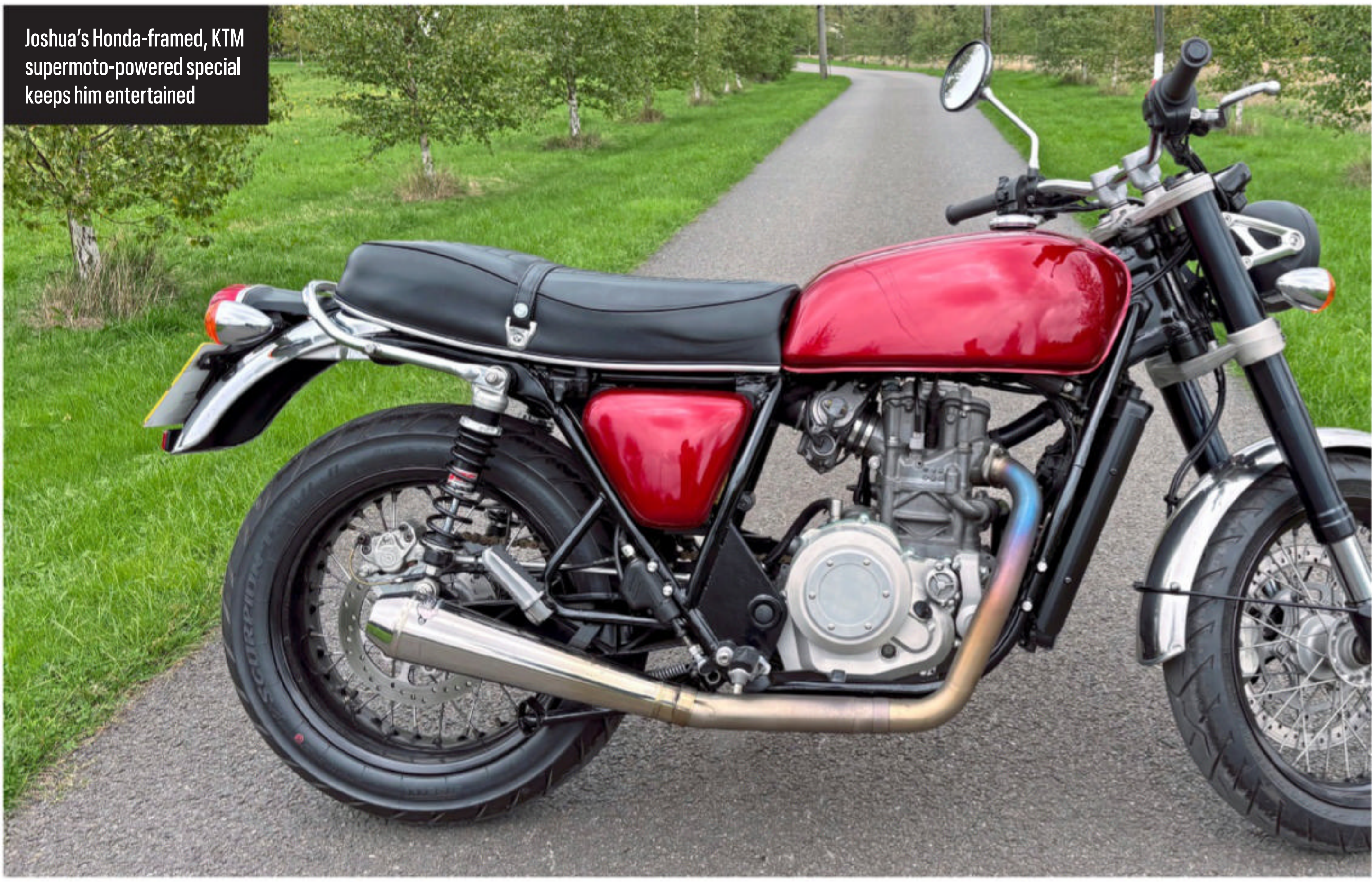
I bought my 1976 BMW R90S in the '70s and I've owned it ever since. Numerous modifications over the years include twin-plugging, gas-flowed heads and increased wheel rim sizes for greater tyre selection. She has now covered 134,000 miles, with several sets of pistons, valves/guides, rings, etc fitted along the way – more as a treat for never refusing to start or run perfectly. She's just had her 80th oil and filter change and fourth frame powdercoat. Every nut, bolt, washer and screw is stainless steel, as are the wheel axles, spokes and exhaust.

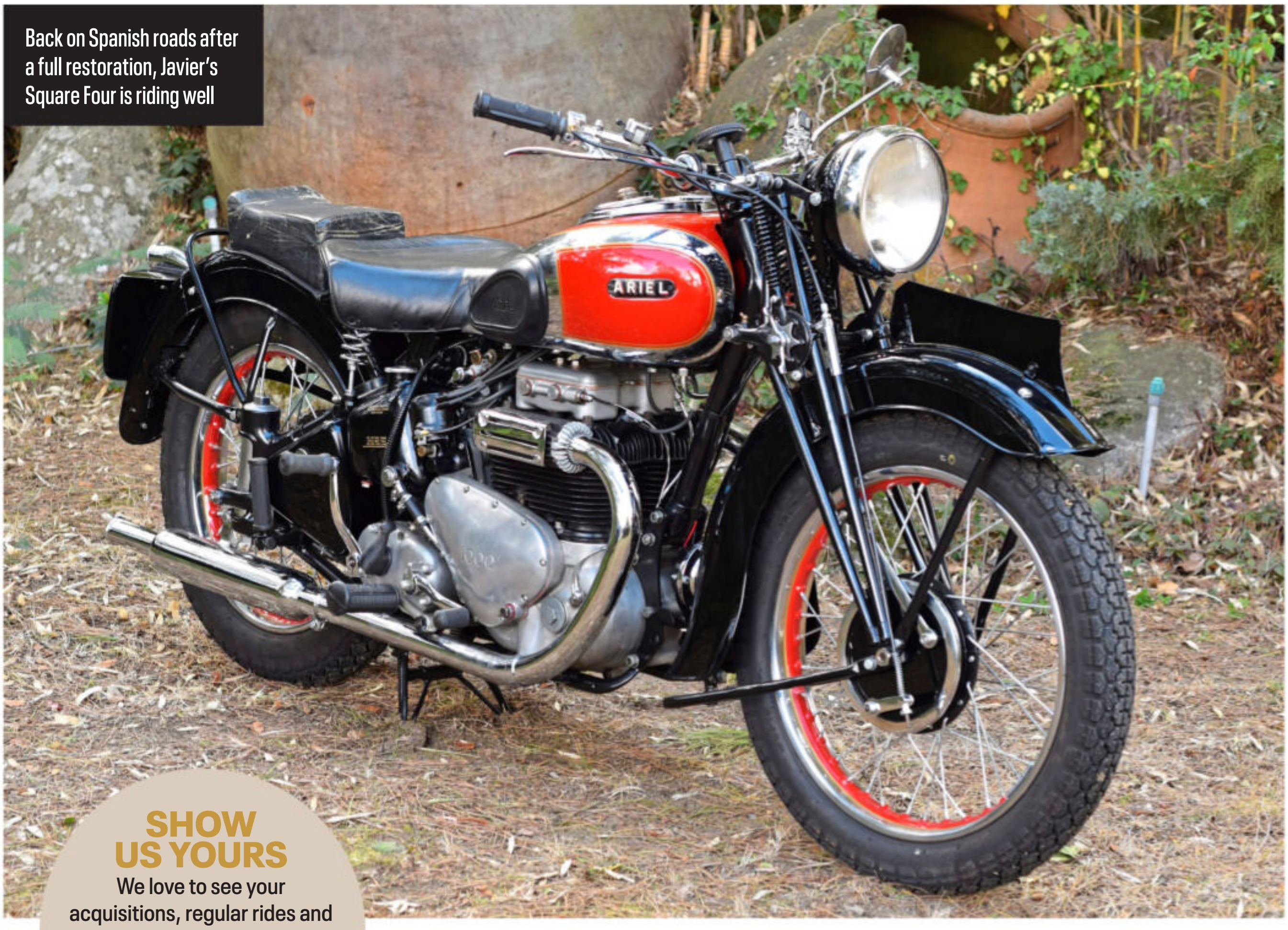
She has been to most of the Isle of Man TTs from 1979 to the early 2000s, along with numerous European trips. There is no discernible wear on the cylinder barrels – and other than the above mentioned modifications, the bike is standard!

Peter Glenville, Cirencester


PETER GLENVILLE

Peter's BM has covered 134,000 miles without ever refusing to start


Joshua's Honda-framed, KTM supermoto-powered special keeps him entertained



Back on Spanish roads after a full restoration, Javier's Square Four is riding well

SHOW US YOURS

We love to see your acquisitions, regular rides and projects. If you've just bought a project, finished a restoration or been for a ride then send us a picture. **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

JOSHUA TUPPER

RESCUED

Factory special

This project took me seven years. It's a 1977 Honda CB550F frame with a 2009 KTM 690cc engine. The Honda also contributed its seat, rear mudguard and sidecovers, with the wheels, shortened forks, shortened swingarm, loom and display from the KTM supermoto. It also has a Triumph tail light and indicators, a Suzuki radiator and a GT550 fuel tank.

The frame needed extensive modifications to the lower rails and sideplates. Everything was made or modified by myself in my detached garage on my lathe and TIG welder, and on the lathe and milling machine at work (although the structural frame parts were professionally welded).

It passed the UK MSVA type inspection and received a 1976 reg plate. It's absolutely nuts to ride, with arm-stretching torque everywhere. I think I succeeded in making a bike that looked 'factory' – a classically Japanese-styled, modernised, dependable and beautiful motorcycle with a liquid-cooled single powerplant.

Joshua Tupper, Kent

REVIVED

Raising an Ariel

Part of this Ariel Square Four 4G's history was known when I acquired it in 2013, as it came with its original British documentation. It was registered on March 30, 1939, in West Sussex and had four owners in England before it moved to Spain in 2000. When I bought it, it was in acceptable, original condition. I enjoyed it for a few years, using it at various events, but the irregular functioning of the magneto triggered a complete restoration, which was carried out by Federico Fernández.

The bike was completely stripped and the cylinder head returned to England for repair at Draganfly Motorcycles. The magneto was repaired by David Lindsley in Leominster, Herefordshire. The rest of the engine was overhauled and, given the good condition of the original components, most of them were re-used. The paintwork was also addressed, preserving the original chrome, and all rubber parts were replaced. The Ariel is now back on the road – it's a very smooth bike and it's riding very well.

Javier Gómez, Madrid, Spain

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H BAUER PUBLISHING
H Bauer Publishing is a company registered in England and Wales with company number: LP003328, registered address: The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London NW1 2PL. VAT number 918 5617 01

MARKETING Phone 01733 468499
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PRODUCTION Phone 01733 468341
Print production carl.lawrence@bauermedia.co.uk
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Frontline, frontline-group.co.uk

Bauer Media Group

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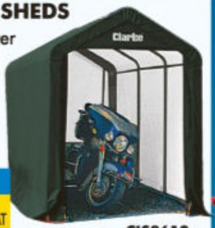

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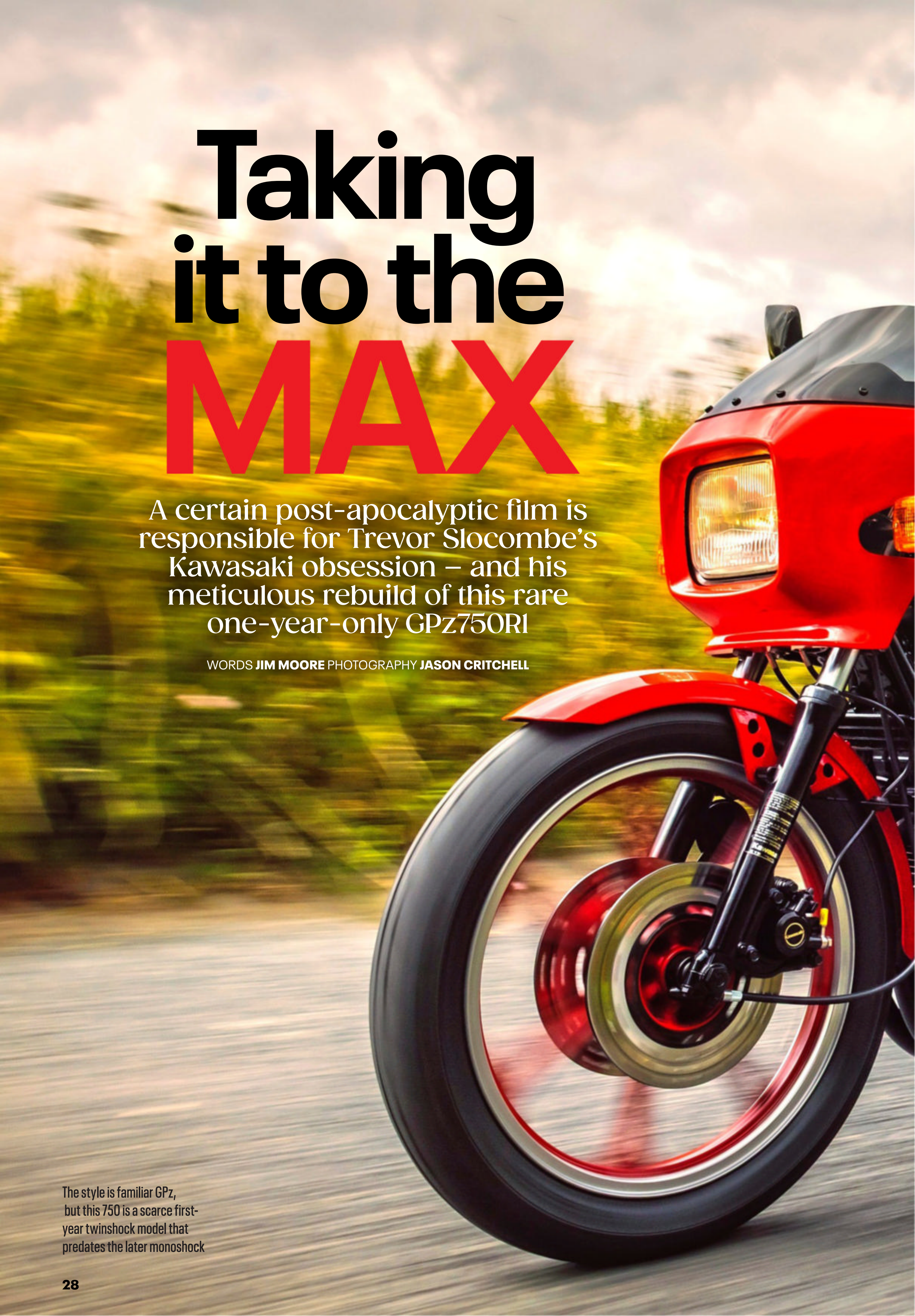


Taking it to the MAX

A certain post-apocalyptic film is responsible for Trevor Slocombe's Kawasaki obsession – and his meticulous rebuild of this rare one-year-only GPz750R1

WORDS **JIM MOORE** PHOTOGRAPHY **JASON CRITCHELL**

The style is familiar GPz, but this 750 is a scarce first-year twinshock model that predates the later monoshock

Kawasaki
Kawasaki
Kawasaki

"It all started with *Mad Max*," admits Trevor Slocombe. "I'd never owned a Kawasaki until I watched that film. It struck a chord with me in 1979 and I've had Kawasakis ever since."

The contents of his double-sized wooden garage reflect this allegiance. There's a headless Z750E motor under the bench, a GPz1100 top end buried beneath the blast cabinet, plus an array of old numberplates from formerly-owned Kwaks and brand-specific memorabilia hanging from the roof.

"My first one was a Z550," explains Trev, whose current haul includes two Z650s ("best Japanese middleweights ever built, in my opinion"), a ZRX1100, a modern Z900RS, a Z1000 A2... and, of course, the gleaming firecracker-red bike we've come to see. He's ploughed a considerable amount of time and money into this first-generation GPz750.

"A full nut and bolt resto," Trev confirms. "And I mean every last one. I had a GPz1100 B1 that I was thinking about restoring, but I'm old school – I like carbs. You know where you are with them, whereas the 1100's EFI system looked like a whole heap of trouble. So I moved the 1100 on and once I had the cash the 750 popped up on an online GPz group that I follow."

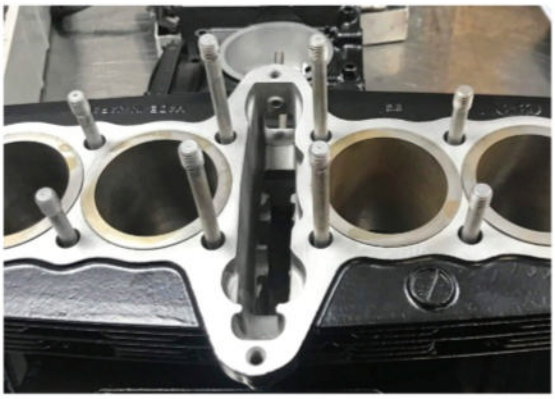
The more Trev conversed with the seller, the more he liked the sound of what was on offer. "The guy said it was 95% there and it was a runner (of sorts), plus it was cheap at £1500. But what I really liked was the fact that it was a first-year model – a 1982 750R1."

The R1 model (or Z750GP, as they were also known) is a rare beast, produced for one year only before the arrival of the more familiar monoshock GPz750A1. So finding a near-complete UK model would pique the interest of any Kawasaki aficionado worthy of the name. Seeing the bike for the first time proved a more sobering experience, though...

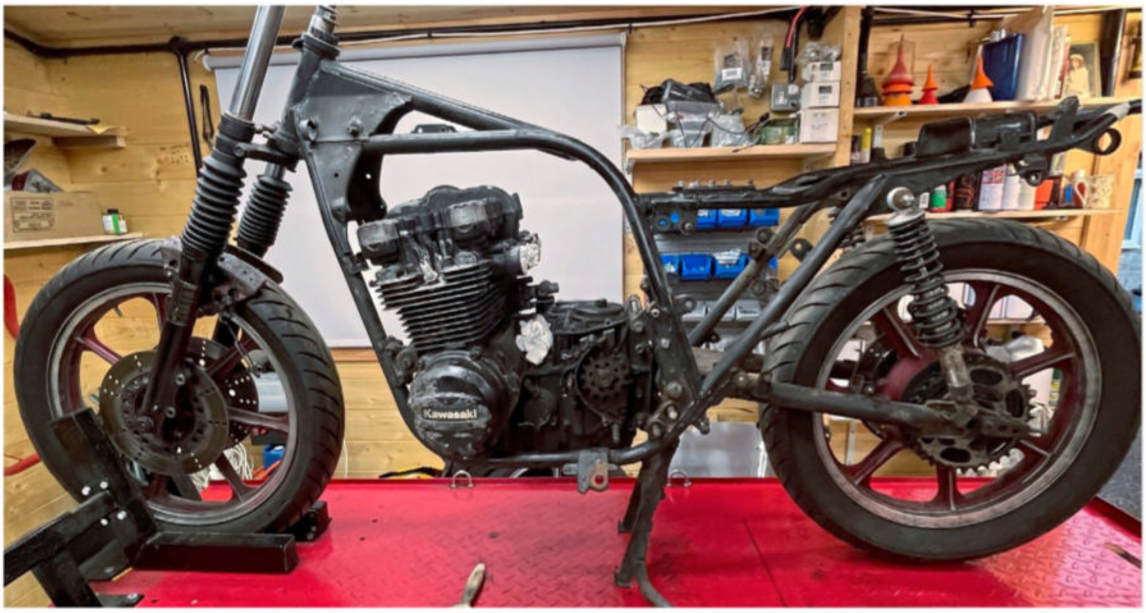
"I bought it blind," he explains. "The seller was miles from me, up north, so all I'd seen were pictures. When I eventually got it delivered to Somerset, my first thought was: 'What the hell have I bought?' It looked like it'd been dredged up from Weymouth harbour. The exhaust headers were rotten, the silencers were off a different model, the wheels were hand-painted with what looked like red bitumen and, when I finally got it running, it sounded like a bag of chisels because two of the downpipe bolts were snapped off in the head. I realised that if I was going to have a shot at this, it'd have to be nothing short of a complete resto."

After stripping the bike down to its component parts – and to hurry things along – Trev took the motor to Road and Racing Performance in Dorset for what he thought would be a light refresh. Once apart, however,

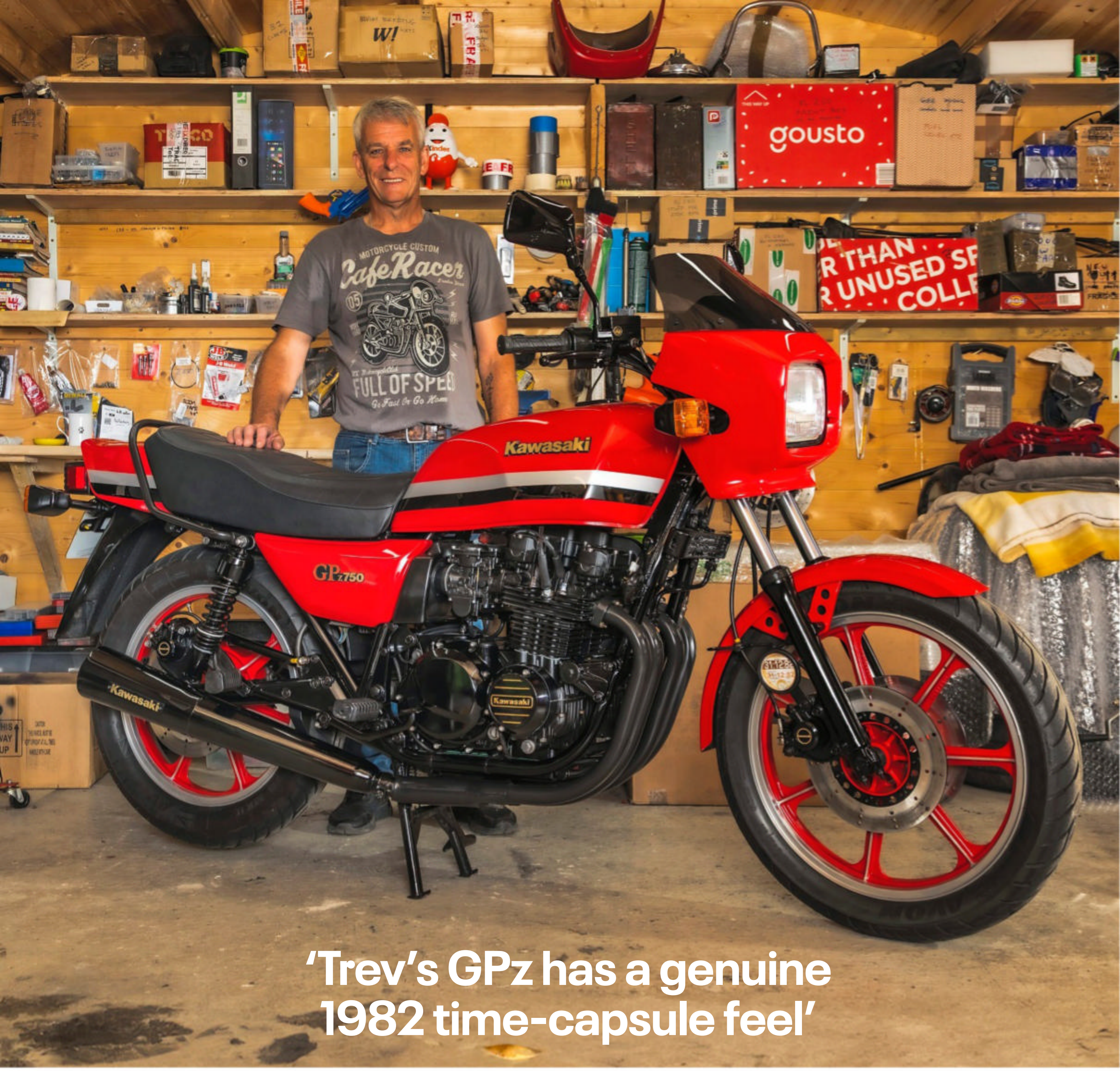
RIGHT Crusty swingarm was beyond a quick wire-brushing. Welding work was required to salvage it



FAR RIGHT Inline four received a full pro rebuild. Owner Trevor's wallet got a full pummelling



RIGHT After buying the bike unseen, Trev decided the only solution for the knackered Kwak was a full nut-and-bolt resto



‘Trev’s GPz has a genuine 1982 time-capsule feel’

ABOVE Trev’s justifiably proud of what he achieved in his ‘man shed’. The finished bike came within a hair’s breadth of a VJMC show Best in Class award

R&R delivered their verdict: “It’s not very good…”

“The crank, rods, bores and gearbox were salvageable, but that was about it,” says Trev of his previously rattly 750. “Pretty much every other moving part was replaced – even the pistons and rings. Once we were in that deep, it didn’t seem right to re-use old parts. I was only going to do this once, so best do it right. The bill for the engine rebuild stung a bit. I needed a sit down after receiving that. It was twice what I had in mind – but having now ridden the bike and felt how smooth and crisp it feels, I’m glad I bit the bullet.”

R&R Performance did a thorough job on the motor, both inside and out. The immaculate paint finish on the crankcases and top end is a visual delight. Restoring the carbs to a similar standard took time and dedication. “They were a proper mess,” says Trevor. “A previous owner [one of a potential 10] had made a poor job of removing the original black paint. And inside they were in an equally sorry state. R&R stripped and rebuilt them, as well as cerakoting the outsides back to black.”

Despite the GPz being near-complete when Trev bought it, he did have to track down several missing parts and find replacements for components that had long since rotted away or were simply unsalvageable. A front mudguard in decent nick made its way over from the States, a rear left indicator and centrestand were found in the UK, while a seller in Germany came up trumps with the rear mudguard.

“The exhausts were the hardest thing to find,” says Trev as we run through the parts he’s had to source. “I put a request up on a GPz Facebook group, asking if anyone had any spares. One guy came forward with side panels to sell. He said he also had two complete new old stock exhaust systems – but he didn’t want to sell either, which wasn’t very helpful, but understandable. Eventually a guy in Italy got in touch and he sold me the silencers. I got the Kawasaki badges for the silencers from Z-Power, who proved really helpful with other hard-to-find stuff.

“The downpipes, I discovered, are near-as-damn-it

RIGHT The tacho which doubles as a voltmeter hints at the era that spawned this bike

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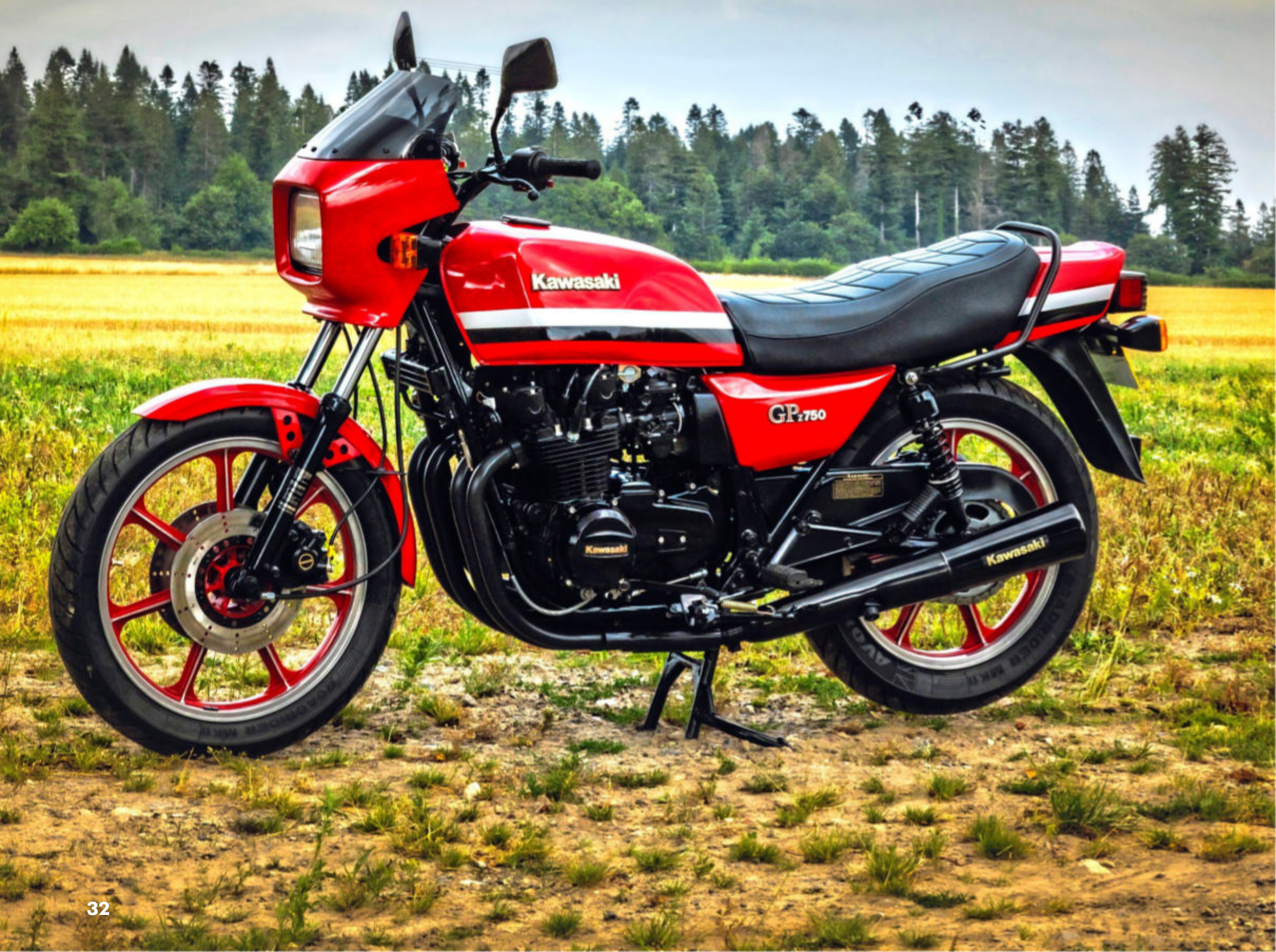
HORN PASS

FAR RIGHT But it's the switchgear that screams of its 1980s origins

> ‘The combination of bright red paint and black engine is so evocative’


Kawasaki
GPz750
Kawasaki
Kawasaki

the same as those on a later 750 Zephyr, so that's what I went with. They were chemically dipped to remove the chrome and also needing teasing open slightly to mate with the link pipe. But that's it – a perfect replacement and genuine Kawasaki. They were cerakoted by Chameleon Vapour Blasting in Yeovil."

With back-to-original restos, the devil is very much in the detail. Trev's GPz displays all the touches that give it a genuine 1982 time-capsule feel, from the technical/warning stickers on the left fork leg and chainguard to the caliper decals and as-new-looking switchgear. "Classic Motorcycle Decals do the stickers – they're the icing on the cake, but there are a couple of details that aren't quite correct.

"The original shocks had red springs, but they weren't on the bike when I got it. I've gone for Hagons, because they build them to your weight. And the connectors to the horns aren't correct. They should crimp over, apparently. That was the difference between me winning Best in Class at the Bristol VJMC show at Bath Showground last year and receiving a Highly Recommended. I was proud of that, because I built the bike to show what could be achieved in a 'man shed'."

Kawasaki was just establishing the GPz name when the 750R1 appeared in '82. Like the GPz1100B1 before it and 1100B2 sold alongside it, the 750 was based on an existing model. In the 750's case, a Z750E. What made it a GPz, and increased its kerb appeal, was sharper bodywork with a natty bikini fairing, a breathed-on motor (saucier cams, 2mm larger carbs, increased compression and polished ports), a black-finished engine and pipes and, most importantly, firecracker red paint. Kawasaki also offered the 750R1 in gold, but next to no one bought that hue – red was far sexier. The job of reinstating the GPz's signature colour was entrusted to Midlands-based airbrush artist Wobbz.

"It's all hand painted," says Trev, proudly brushing a hand across the tank. "Apart from the badges, obviously. I was worried about the state of the tank at first. Someone had removed the badges and filled in the recesses. I was expecting half the tank to be full of filler, but it was really good – both inside and out. The screen's original as well – it took hours and hours to polish out all the scratches. It's as good as I can get it."

For a bike that's been gone through thoroughly from front to back, it's fitting that the most satisfying job of the rebuild required the same approach. "The wiring loom could have gone again," Trev explains. "But lots of the wiring was cracked, frayed and broken, so Matt – a friend who's an electrical engineer – and I made a new one from scratch, laying the old one out on the garage floor and using it as a guide."

Back in '82, the GPz was as good as a 750 could be, if Kawasaki were to be believed. The then 'all-new' Z750GP was, Kawasaki asserted: 'a totally uncompromising pure sport motorcycle capable of racing performance and handling. Yet, on the road, its swiftness is matched by sweet temperament and considerable ride comfort'. That's quite a claim.

ABOVE Trev went with new Hagon shocks. Original springs were finished in red

Trev's top three tools

Blasting cabinet

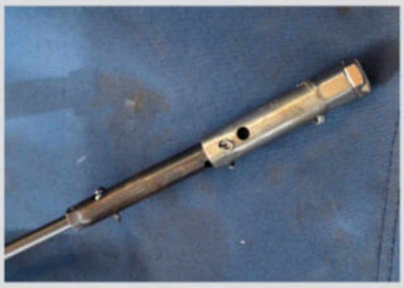
"I've had this five years and use it for all my restorations. It was a £200 internet buy and it's paid for itself many times over. It's not the best quality - I've had to reseal it, as the rubber edge seals that come with it are crap, plus I've fitted an internal LED light so I can better see what I'm doing."

Vevor ultrasonic cleaner

"My wife bought me this for Christmas three years ago. It's brilliant. I use it for brake calipers, carbs (four at a time), suspension bushes, the lot. I used a Dremel to clean stuff before; this is infinitely better and more effective. Wouldn't be without it."

Fork dismantling tool

"I made this out of two old box spanners and a length of solid bar, to help with dismantling forks. It simply drops down inside the stanchion, grips the bolt that attaches to the fork leg, then I turn it with a wrench. It's simple and easy to use - and has saved the day many a time."



SPECIFICATION | KAWASAKI GPz750R1

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Air-cooled dohc 8v inline-four **Capacity** 738cc **Bore x stroke** 66 x 54mm **Compression ratio** 9.5:1 **Carburation** 4 x 34mm Mikuni CV **Ignition** Transistorised
TRANSMISSION **Primary/final drive** Chain/chain **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Six-speed
CHASSIS **Frame** Tubular steel cradle **Front suspension** 36mm air-assisted telescopic forks **Rear suspension** Twin shocks with adjustable preload and rebound damping **Front brakes** 2 x 260mm discs, single-pot calipers **Rear brake** 260mm disc, single-pot caliper **Wheels** Seven-spoke cast aluminium **Tyres** Front: 100/90 V19. Rear:120/90 V18
DIMENSIONS **Wheelbase** 1460mm (57.8in) **Seat height** 800mm (31.2in) **Dry weight** 217kg (478 lb) **Fuel capacity** 21.7 litres (4.77 gallons)
PERFORMANCE **Power** (claimed) 78.9bhp at 9500rpm **Torque** (claimed) 48.4 lb ft at 7500rpm **Top speed** 135mph

The latter statements ring true as I get acquainted with Trev’s restored 750. A sumptuous seat, relaxed clip-on-style ’bars and compact dimensions (for a 40-year-old air-cooled bruiser) ensure that I’m comfortable from the off. There’s more than a hint of Z650 about the ergonomics and ride, too – the chassis feels sure-footed, accurate in its interpretation of my inputs and well balanced considering it’s controlling 220kg-plus when juiced. There’s also plenty of feedback from the stripped and rebuilt forks, Hagon shocks and Avon Roadrider rubber.

Trev’s covered around 500 miles on the fresh engine, so I’m keen not to push it too hard while the new pistons, rings and bearings bed-in. But, as Trev’s already expressed, it’s an incredibly smooth unit with decent drive from low rpm right through its midrange. I’m limiting revs to 7000rpm, but it’s obvious there’s plenty more to come further around the dial – maximum torque doesn’t come into play until 7500rpm, while peak power isn’t reached until 9500rpm. For road riding, sedate or brisk, this dohc eight-valve unit and the chassis complement each other beautifully.

There are tweaks still to be made, however. An electrical issue inside the clocks – GPzs were among the first Japanese machines to feature then cutting-edge LCD readouts for fuel – is causing the central display to flash on and off, while the speedo needle swings erratically around the dial, at times reading in excess of 150mph through town… “I’ll sort that once the weather turns and I put her away for the winter,” reckons Trev. More pressing is what feels like a partially blocked pilot jet, occasionally roughening low rpm running. “I’ll whip off the carbs and have them through the ultrasonic cleaner again.”

ABOVE There’s plenty of feedback from the forks and shocks, backed up with equal levels of rider comfort

Minor irritations aside – part and parcel of every thorough rebuild – Trev’s 750 is a joy to ride and a perfect insight into the origins of a model range that went on to embody the unashamed pomp and power of 1980s sports motorcycling.

“It’s amazing the attention that it gets when I take it out,” says Trev of his Kawasaki. “That combination of bright red paint and black engine is so evocative to so many people who rode bikes at that time.” One fella even rushes over while we’re out and about on the GPz. “Is it for sale?” he asks. “Everything is at the right price,” responds Trev. “But after everything I’ve put into this, I reckon this one is a keeper.”

Wise choice. CB

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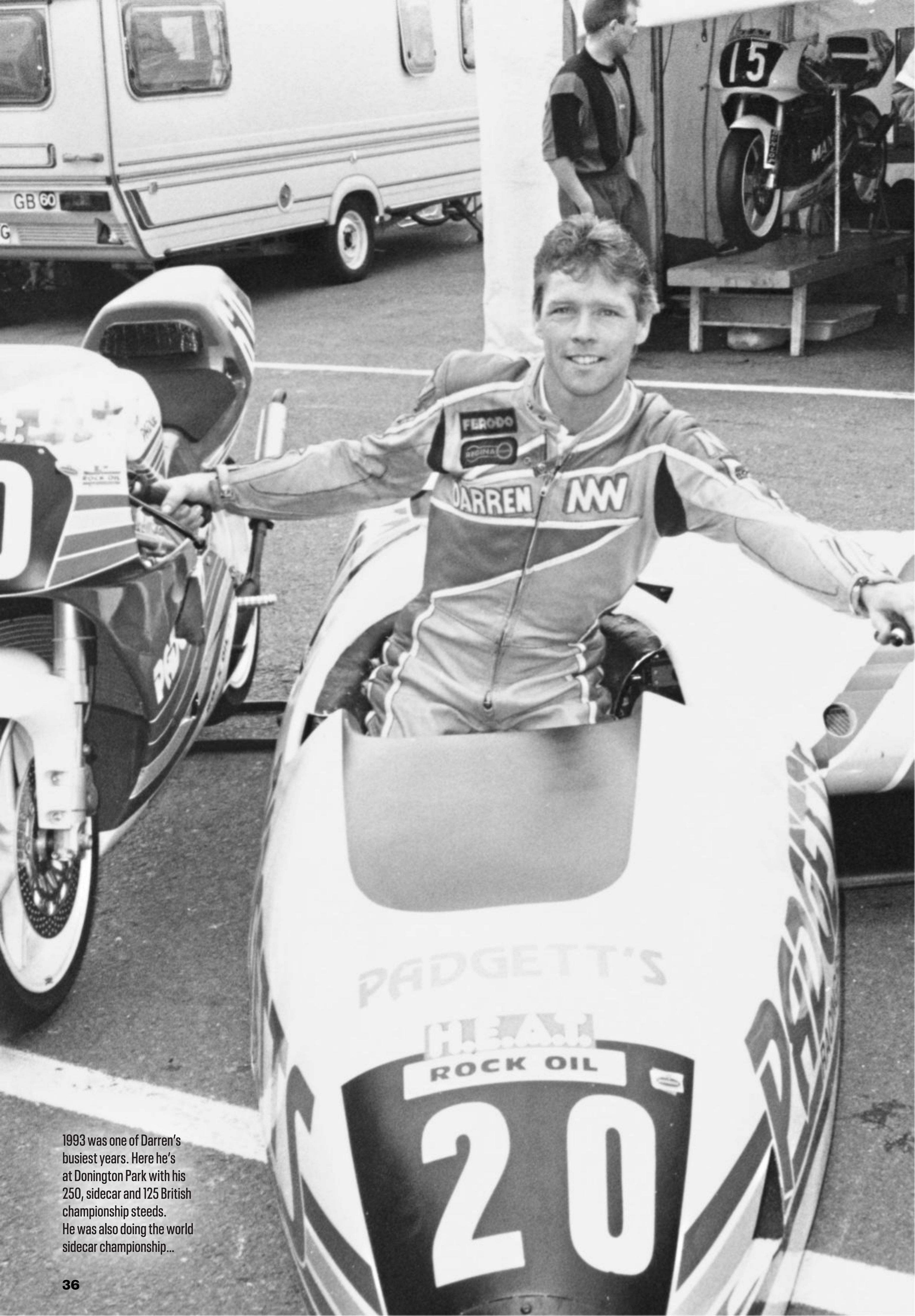
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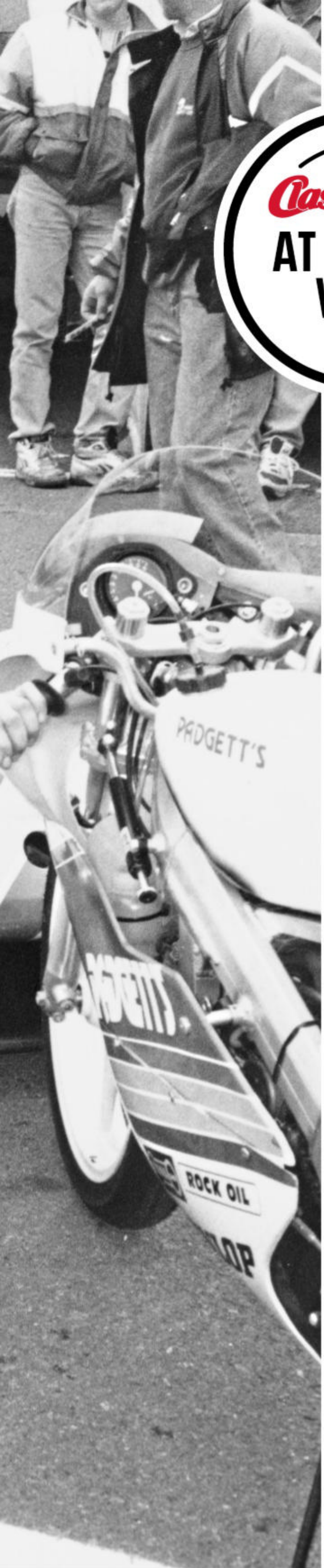
1993 was one of Darren's busiest years. Here he's at Donington Park with his 250, sidecar and 125 British championship steeds. He was also doing the world sidecar championship...



ClassicBike AT LUNCH WITH…

Most multi-talented racer since John Surtees? Quite possibly

Darren Dixon

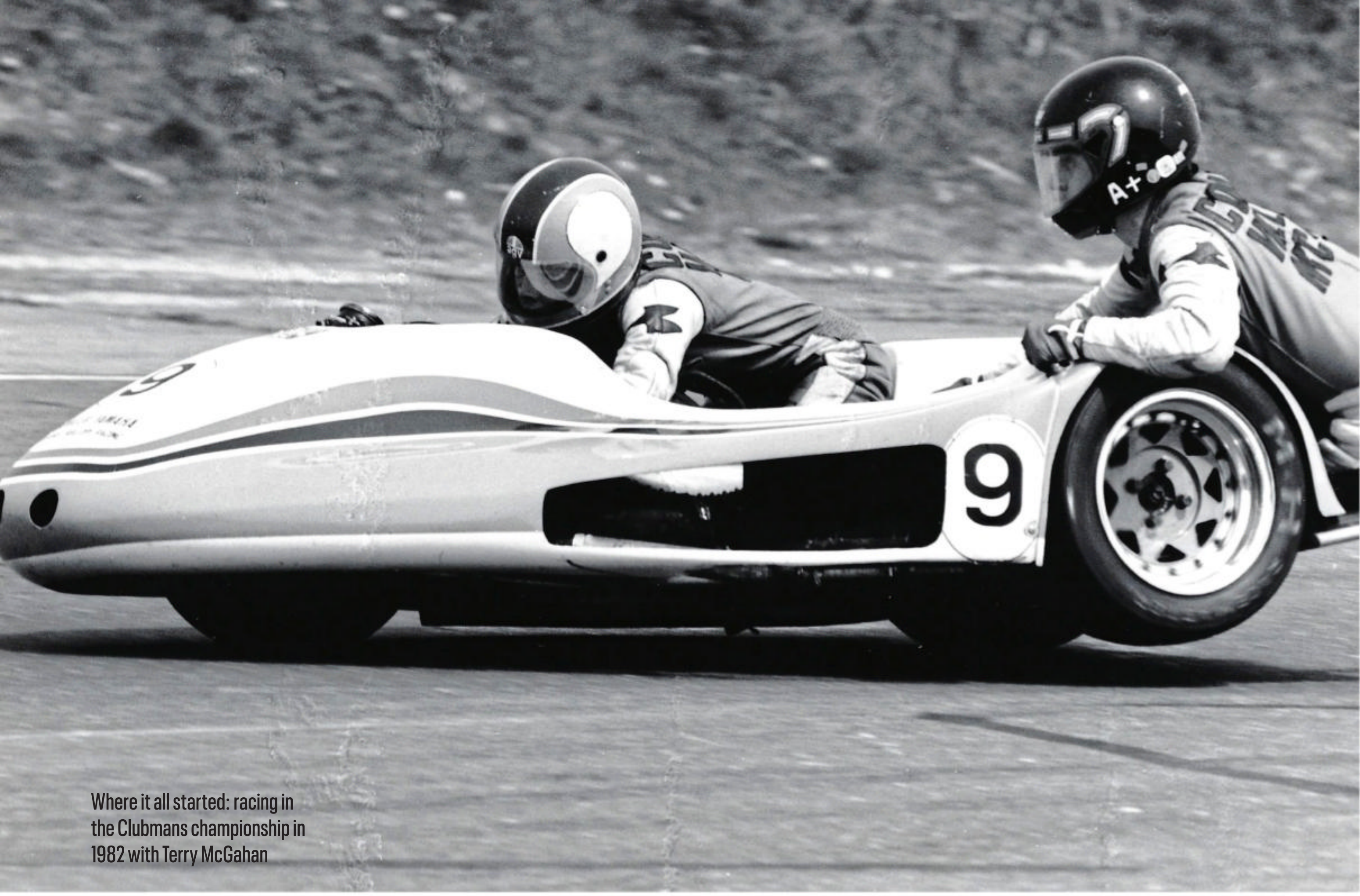
He won two world sidecar titles, British Superbikes and at one point seemed to be racing everything in the paddock. How on earth do you race a 250 GP bike, superbike and outfit on the *same* day?

Words JOHN WESTLAKE Photography BAUER ARCHIVE, STEVE GAMBLE

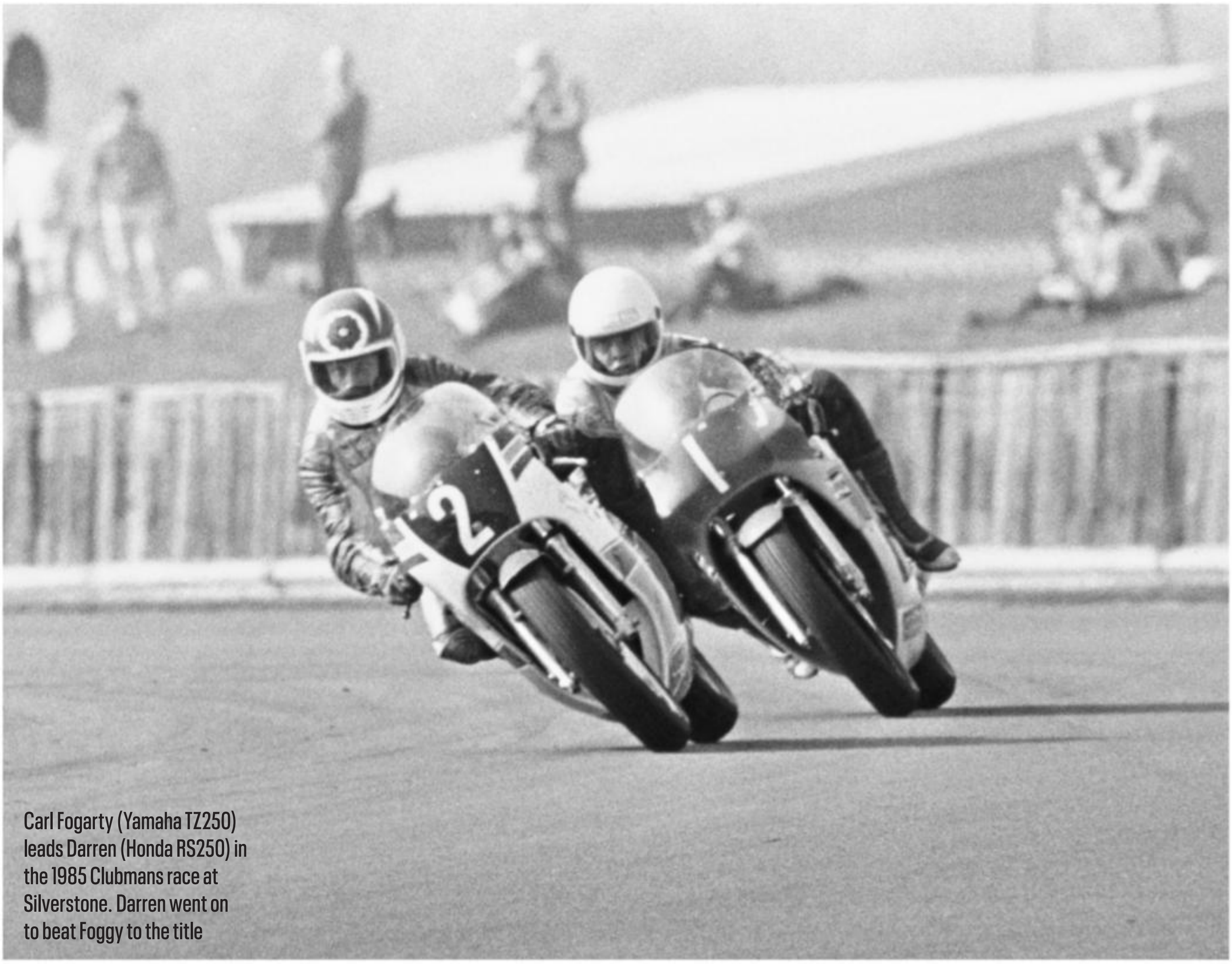
There are so many extraordinary aspects to Darren Dixon's racing career that it's difficult to know where to start. Most famously, he won the British Superbike Championship in 1988 (then TT F1) and two World Sidecar Championships in 1995 and 1996. But he's also the only person to race in a 500cc Grand Prix and a sidecar GP on the same day, lead British championship races in 125s, 250s and sidecars at the same meet and take pole in his first ever sidecar GP. Dixon had so much talent there were barely enough classes to contain it.

But let's kick off with the time he raced a Honda RS500 GP bike at the North West 200, a tale containing all the elements of a typical Dixon anecdote: bad luck, unwavering commitment, phenomenal speed and a huge bust-up. "It all started when I found myself without a ride in January 1989," says Darren, 65, eating a sandwich in a mate's awning at the unglamorous end of the Brands Hatch paddock during a round of British Superbikes.

"I'm not good at putting it about and chatting to people – I keep myself to myself – so I was up shit creek without a paddle. Then a mate suggested I call Francis Neill [the Irish car dealer and sponsor], and he said: 'Yeah, you can ride one of my RC30s and maybe have a go on the RS500'."



Where it all started: racing in the Clubmans championship in 1982 with Terry McGahan



Carl Fogarty (Yamaha TZ250) leads Darren (Honda RS250) in the 1985 Clubmans race at Silverstone. Darren went on to beat Foggy to the title

It seemed like good fortune was shining down on Darren – but, as is so often the case in his rollercoaster career, things didn't go smoothly.

"The trouble was that Francis had seven riders and it was an absolute shambles – there were just too many of us. I had a bit of success on the RC30 – I was top scorer in the Eurolantic Challenge [the Europe v America version of the Transatlantic] – but I didn't really like it. After the RG500 that I won the British championship on, the RC felt like a tank.

"Anyway, I was supposed to ride the 500 in the British GP that year [as a wildcard] and in preparation I rode it at the North West 200." Not only was this Darren's first go on the RS500, but he'd never been to the NW200 before either. "It was scary fast. The chicanes weren't there back then, so you were flat-out until you turned left. I know they do over 200mph these days and we were probably only doing 185mph, but it felt like you were going down some country track – you couldn't see a bloody thing.

"I remember there was a guy with a green flag who stood at the brow of the hill as the road went towards Metropole, and he waved it to tell you it's all clear. I couldn't even see his flag because my brain was being shaken about so much."

But despite the vision issues, Darren was fast. "I was leading in the first race and went under the lap record on the third lap. I remember going down one of the straights and thinking: 'This is so bloody dangerous – I can't see much, I don't really know where I'm going and I'm flat-out'. But my will to do well overcame everything – the scared bit went out the window and I just hung on for dear life."

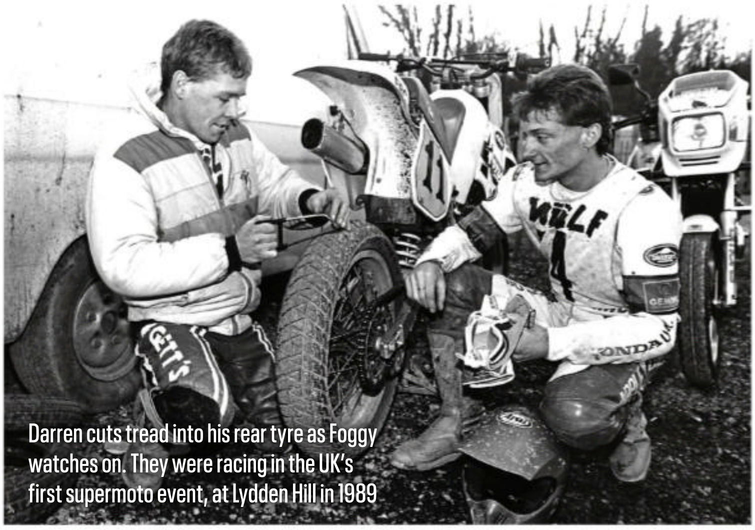
Then disaster almost struck... "The Honda seized as I went over the hill in the lead – pulling the clutch in didn't do any good, because I'd lost that off the line. Luckily it immediately unseized itself after locking up – it didn't lock solid. If it had, I'd have been up the road at 180mph on my arse. It was only later that night that I thought about how close that one was."

After his RS baptism of fire, Darren was primed for the British GP. "I turned up and found out that Andy McGladdery [another one of Francis Neill's riders] was on my 500. I phoned Francis and had a big row with him and that was the end of that. It all ended quite badly," says Dixon.

It turned out that some Irish racers had been bad-mouthing him, saying he was ripping Neill off. "It was mental. He wanted me to pay for an engine that had blown up when someone else was riding it, and I wasn't having that. The day after the row, he turned up on my doorstep with two coppers.

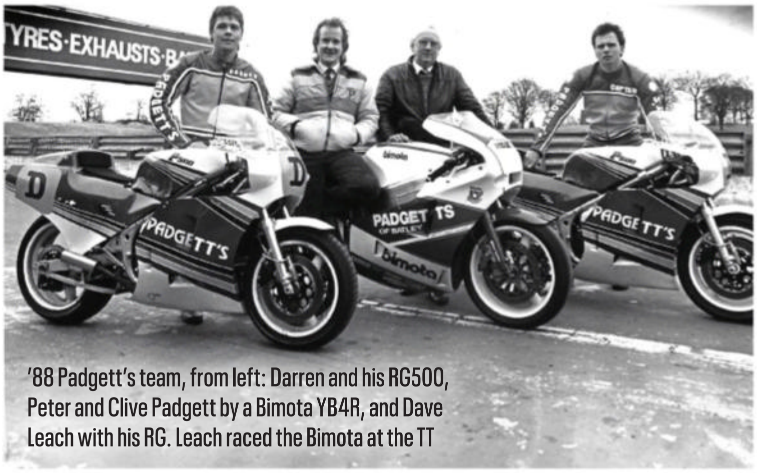
"He wanted his van back, which someone had said I wanted to keep – but that wasn't true, so I gave him the keys and explained my side of the story with the exploding engine. And then 10 minutes later, he offered me a ride for the following year. I wasn't keen..."

So Darren decided to change tack in the exuberant fashion that makes his career so extraordinary. "I was desperate to race GPs, so I thought I'd swap to sidecars," he says matter-of-factly, as if explaining that he'd changed from Tetleys to PG.


Darren cuts tread into his rear tyre as Foggy watches on. They were racing in the UK's first supermoto event, at Lydden Hill in 1989

Darren looking understandably chipper after winning the British sidecar GP at Donington in 1993

'In 1991 we went into the world championships and came third in our first sidecar GP'


'88 Padgett's team, from left: Darren and his RG500, Peter and Clive Padgett by a Bimota YB4R, and Dave Leach with his RG. Leach raced the Bimota at the TT

To be fair, the decision wasn't as radical as it sounds because he'd exhibited massive raw talent on three wheels, having come second in the Marlboro Clubman's Sidecar Championship back in 1982.

That first bout of sidecars came about thanks to a less positive side of Darren's exuberance. "I got put away at 18. I was done for hitting a copper, which I actually didn't do. Mind you, I was a right pain in the arse and probably deserved to go away for some of the other mischief I was up to. They collared me because I was one of the worst ones in the area [he was brought up near Dover] and put me in a young offenders' detention centre.

"That made me realise I really didn't want to go down that road, so when I came out I thought I'd give racing a go to try and keep me out of trouble." Darren's dad – an ex-sidecar racer – owned a motorcycle shop in Dover and managed to buy Jock Taylor's world championship-winning outfit for Darren to have a go in. "So I rocked up at Brands Hatch for my first ever race with a GP sidecar and everyone's telling me I'm going to kill myself." Not quite – Darren was immediately fast and was winning by the third race.

"We [his passenger was Terry McGahan] nearly won the Marlboro Clubman's championship on it in the second year, but we broke down in the last round and Steve Webster [the 10-time world champion] won it. After that we ran out of money, so I packed up racing and worked at my dad's shop."

Then a friend offered him a go on an RG500 he'd just bought. "I'd never ridden a solo on a race track, so I was interested to see what it was like. I promptly went five seconds a lap faster than my mate and he said: 'I'm wasting my time – do you want to race it for a full season next year?' So I did – and I won the Lord of Lydden and loads of club races."

'Clive Padgett said: "You're in the 500GP and sidecars"'

Next was the Marlboro Clubmans Championship, pitting himself against the likes of Ray Stringer, Mike Edwards and Steve Spray. "Suddenly I was racing some of the country's best 250 riders – Carl Fogarty was in there, too." Darren won the championship on his Honda RS250, beating Foggy on his TZ250.

The following year – 1986 – he went up another level and came third in the British 250 championship behind Niall Mackenzie and Donnie McLeod on their superfast Armstrong GP bikes. "Doing that on my production Honda was pretty good." He beat Foggy in that championship, too.

After a season struggling to make a Kawasaki GPZ750 competitive, he got a call from the dealer and race team guru Clive Padgett, who asked if he wanted to ride an

On the Suzuki RG500 in 1988. He loved the Padgett's-prepared bike – it was the last two-stroke ever to win a British Superbike title

Darren lines up at Donington with brother Sean as passenger at (we think) the 1991 British Sidecar GP

PADGETT
DUCKHAMS

RG500 in the British F1 championship (the forerunner to British Superbikes). It was an interesting time for superbikes, as the out-of-favour two-stroke 500s did battle with new-fangled four-stroke 750s.

"I loved that RG. There was me and Steve Spray on the RGs, then there was Whitham and Co on the four-strokes. They were all fairly equal – the top speeds were similar and though the four-strokes got more traction out of corners, my RG steered and stopped better. It was the best bike I ever rode – it was bloody brilliant and I'm so glad I won the championship on it."

We're now back where we began, with Darren taking an RS500 to the North West with combustible sponsor Francis Neill. "After that year, I desperately wanted to go GP racing – but I knew it wasn't going to happen on a solo. So I thought I'd buy my own sidecar and work my way up. Then Clive Padgett offered me a test on one of his outfits..."

The only problem was that Darren didn't have a passenger. Cue another one of his decisions that, in hindsight, seems slightly rash. "I asked my brother Sean, who'd never raced in his life," he says, as if this was the only logical solution. I chortle in anticipation of the mayhem that will inevitably unfold. "You might laugh," he says, grinning, "but he did OK – the next time we rode it was at Cadwell in a British Championship round and we finished third."

The duo wanted to enter the world championships, but didn't have the right licence so made do by going for the European title. At the first round at the Hungaroring, the bike spluttered off the line and they were dead last into the first corner. After it cleared, the pair went through the field and won. They went on to win the European title that year.

And remarkably, it got better. "In 1991 we [Darren's passenger was then Andy Hetherington, after Sean headed off to get married] went into the world championships and came third in our first GP."

My eyebrows bounce off the top of the awning. Third!? "Honestly, I didn't think anything about it – it felt normal to me." Don't for a moment think this is arrogance – Darren is relentlessly humble and I have to crowbar his best exploits from him. It's more that he'd got used to the fact that almost everyone else was slower than him.

By 1993 Darren was competing in the world and British sidecar championships, which was enough to be going on with for any normal human. "Then Clive Padgett asked if I wanted to ride 125cc and 250cc solos in the British championship as well, as I'd be there anyway. They just kept bringing more bikes – 'You might as well ride this one, and that one...'

"That year at Brands, for example, I rode an OW-01 [Yamaha's RC30 rival], a 250 two-stroke and my sidecar." It suddenly dawns on me there must have been practical problems with this. For example, weren't all the gearchanges different? "Yeah. The OW-01 had a road gearchange [one down, five up], the 250 had a race gearchange [one up, five down] and the sidecar was the other way round completely. But I never got confused or got it wrong – your mind

YOKOHAMA
MCN

Dixon and Andy Hetherington enjoy some bubbly in 1992

PADGETTS V4
10
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Donington, 1994: using a Yamaha 500cc V4 didn't really work out, but Dixon and Hetherington won the world title the following year

just automatically knows what to do." There's that lack of comprehension of lesser beings again.

The fun stopped at Cadwell though, after Darren took pole on the 125 and 250, but crashed in the 250 race and broke his collarbone. "After that, I knocked the solos on the head for the rest of the year to concentrate on the sidecar."

In 1994 Padgett's were running a 500GP team using Yamaha's V4, and had the brainwave of putting one into Darren's sidecar. Alas, it didn't have the raw horsepower required to be competitive, but there was an upside of keeping the team sweet: "Just before the Hockenheim GP, Clive [Padgett] rings up and says: 'Sean Emmett has hurt himself, so you're riding in the 500GP as well as sidecars'."

Darren was understandably doubtful – there were good reasons why no one before or since had ever attempted such a thing. "But Clive said: 'Nah, you'll be alright'. His thinking was that I used to ride an RG500, so I'd be fine. But I'd never ridden a Yamaha V4 – and this was a 500GP with Doohan, Schwantz, Cadalora and Kocinski on factory bikes, not a British championship round."

Darren was used to swapping machinery, but this was so extreme that even he struggled. "I kept going straight on at the chicanes on the bike, because they're going so much faster than the sidecar. I was missing braking points all over the place.

MOTOR CYCLE NE
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Having become world champion, Darren continued his good work in the ADM-powered outfit in 1996

"But I did qualify for the GP on the V4, and I was only a second off John Reynolds [Padgett's lead rider] who'd been riding it for a year – I was pleased with that." The race was a disappointment, though – Darren highsided, managed to stay on and was running last when he eventually had to pull in.

But the sidecar side of things was on the up. With help from engine manufacturer ADM and new sponsor Aden Murcutt, Darren and passenger Andy Hetherington beat the great Rolf Biland in 1995 to take the world title. "It wasn't exactly easy – it never is – but I had good equipment and I was fairly good by then." So good that he and Andy pulled off the same feat in 1996.

With two consecutive titles in the bag, Darren looked set for domination, just as his arch rival Steve Webster had done before him (and after, as it turned out). But Darren had other ideas. "I thought I'd go back to solos," he says, with the air of a man who can't quite remember why that seemed a good idea at the time. "I raced a Kawasaki ZX-7R in British Superbikes, but my heart wasn't really in it. So I jacked it in and went back to run the bike shop in Dover." He did that for the next 15 years.

We're running out of time and it seems crass to end with a whimper when so much of Darren's career was a whoop of joyous madness. So I ask about his son Jake, the Moto2 front-runner who'll be a factory Honda superbike rider in 2026. Darren's face lights up. "He's done so well and I'm so proud of him. It was difficult for us, because he had so much talent and we had no money. I recognised a bit of myself in him, and I didn't want him to make all the mistakes I'd made, so while it was very difficult wondering how we were going to pay for everything, I knew we had to keep going.

"As for me, I don't have many regrets. Maybe I should have made some different decisions to earn a bit of money, but then if I'd done that maybe I wouldn't have won those world titles. Should I have stuck to racing solos? Yeah, maybe. But I always did what I thought was the right thing at the time, so there's no point regretting stuff. I did OK."

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1927 Brough Superior SS100

Brough Superior's flagship celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2025. Most of these collectors' items have been bought, sold, modified, restored and re-restored many times... but not this one

Words **RICK PARKINGTON** Photography **GARY MARGERUM**

Unpaved road and original Brough Superior – Rick really has invented time travel

I'm not sure George Brough gets a fair deal from history. In his later life he was almost worshipped by members of the Brough Club, referred to as 'GB' as though it were blasphemy to utter his name. But over the 55 years since his passing, historians have painted him as something of a glorified wheeler dealer; a larger-than-life character who used his charisma to weave an image of luxury around his brand, when in reality he didn't make motorcycles at all – he just assembled them from a variety of bought-in parts.

Even if that were all there was to Brough Superior, while riding this 1927 SS100 I really doubt any of his customers would have cared. This is not a motorcycle made to disappoint. The Brough was absurdly powerful for its time; I'm not about to do a maximum speed check on a century-old motorcycle that is worth more than my soul, but the SS100 came with a 100mph guarantee at a time when the national speed limit was still officially 20mph. That's 300mph in today's money.

But even that doesn't paint the full picture, because in 1927 there were no motorways or even suitably smooth and straight roads to experience 100mph. Even in the late 1930s, when *MotorCycle* magazine organised Brooklands 'Clubman Races' (essentially timed track days), numerous riders blew up their high-performance road bikes because the banked oval circuit was the only place they'd ever been able to ride at sustained full throttle. The Brough's performance was not just 'fast' – it was an experience as unworldly to most of the population as today's silly billionaires whizzing about in their personal space craft.

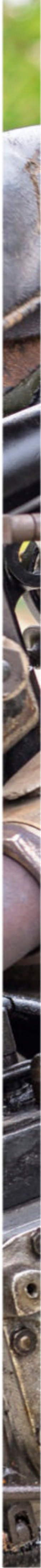
You certainly cannot compare the Brough to a modern 100mph machine; the ride is a completely different experience. At the front end, the SS100 has 'Castle' forks, George's fairly frank copy of Harley-Davidson's 'springer' forks which were a popular fitting on many big twin Brooklands racers. The steering is good and the frame is man enough for the engine power – but with a rigid rear end, thin tyres and undamped forks, you feel the undulations on the road keenly (British roads have some impressive undulations). This creates a far greater sense of speed than comes with a well-suspended bike on bouncy tyres.

If that sounds like I'm saying it feels faster than it is, I'd argue that it's more the case that modern bikes feel slower than they are; advances in safety and comfort have meant that for the same buzz you need to go much faster. The Brough has the kind of power you register from a sense of propulsion, not a dyno printout. Where more modern machines seem to pull at your arms, on the Brough it feels more like it's pushing you from behind; it's more supportive, as though its saying 'We're going to accelerate' not 'I'm off and you'd better hang on'.

A three-speed gearbox may seem inadequate on a sporting motorcycle, but the huge spread of torque available from the heavy flywheels of a 1000cc JAP KTOR engine makes such concerns trifling. The bike has the solid, substantial feel that comes from having

RIGHT Repaired but not restored, the engine is even more handsome for its patina, oil and history

LEFT Rick will use any excuse to show off part of his enviable sock collection



Brough Superior
Brough Superior
JAP

Why it hasn't been restored

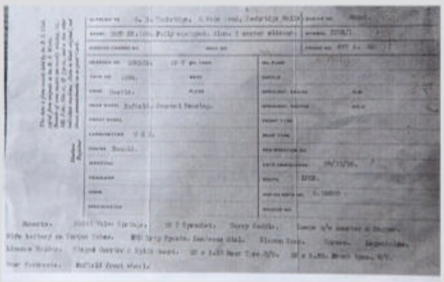
From George Brough's ledgers we know that PM 3970 was despatched as a 1927-model sidecar combination to GE Tunbridge, a dealer in Tunbridge Wells on November 29, 1926.

The buyer was one Ernest Eustace Baltinglass Parsons of Argos Hill, East Sussex, a gentleman descended from Irish nobility. Ernest ran the bike with a sidecar, but found it difficult to start and sold it to Percy Crittall of Crittall's garage in nearby Crowborough in around 1933. The latter kept it taxed up until 1941.

After that ,Percy kept it dismantled until 1961 when he sold it to another local enthusiast, Eric Peathers, who was looking for fresh projects. Eric also bought a crashed SS100 (RK 8700) for £5 for spares from an advert in *Exchange and Mart*, plus a 1929 SS80 to keep him busy. Part of Eric's resto plan was to fit the less-worn engine from RK, so around 1970 he passed PM's original engine on to Australian Gary Ross, who'd bought a project SS100 (YH 1699) with an incorrect side-valve engine. Eric then gave the RK frame to another club member who used it to recreate a 'Pendine Racer', fitted with a JAP engine from a Montgomery.

By the 1980s, Eric realised he'd never get around to restoring PM, so it ended up in Simon Miles' care. "But there was no real point starting the job unless we could get the original engine back," Simon recalls, "and Gary Ross wouldn't sell it." It wasn't until 2015, when Gary died, that his project, fitted with PM's original engine, came up for auction. "It was bloody expensive," groans Simon, "but we had to buy it to put everything right! Plus, we now had the engine for RK - and since Eric had kept all the original tinware when he sold the frame, we were able to restore that one too!

"But the really funny thing is that all that business with the engine getting swapped is the only reason this bike escaped being restored. It's never really left Sussex. Over 40 years attitudes changed; people realised its true value lay in its originality, so when I started the job in 2023, it was to preserve, not restore."



Despatched November 1926 - exactly 99 years ago

big bits of strong metal in its make-up, yet its long, low stance prevents it feeling ungainly or even especially heavy. It lopes along like a big cat. This is clearly a predatory motorcycle – it may be old, but that doesn't lessen the taste of danger that dries your throat...

Or am I just imagining it? Maybe George has ensnared me in his web of mystique. Is the SS100 really just a 'bitsa', put together by 1920s Nottingham's answer to Arthur Daley?

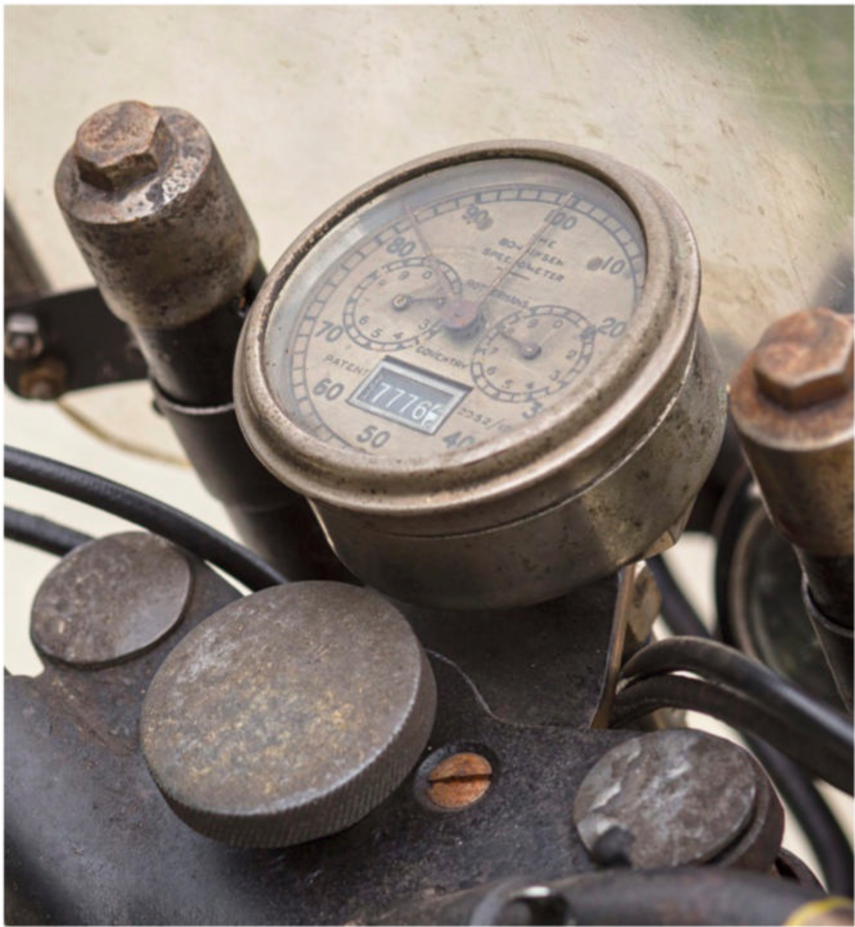
I don't think so. I've never lusted after a Brough – apart from a brief period in my teens, when I fell for *CB*'s Winter '79 SS100 cover bike. Natalie Wood had a similar effect on me at the time, but I was realistic enough to know neither would figure in my future. All the Broughs I saw were glitter balls of polished nickel plate and I find the exclusive image off-putting. Like Porsches and Rolex watches, they seemed to 'say things about you' that I don't really want said about me.

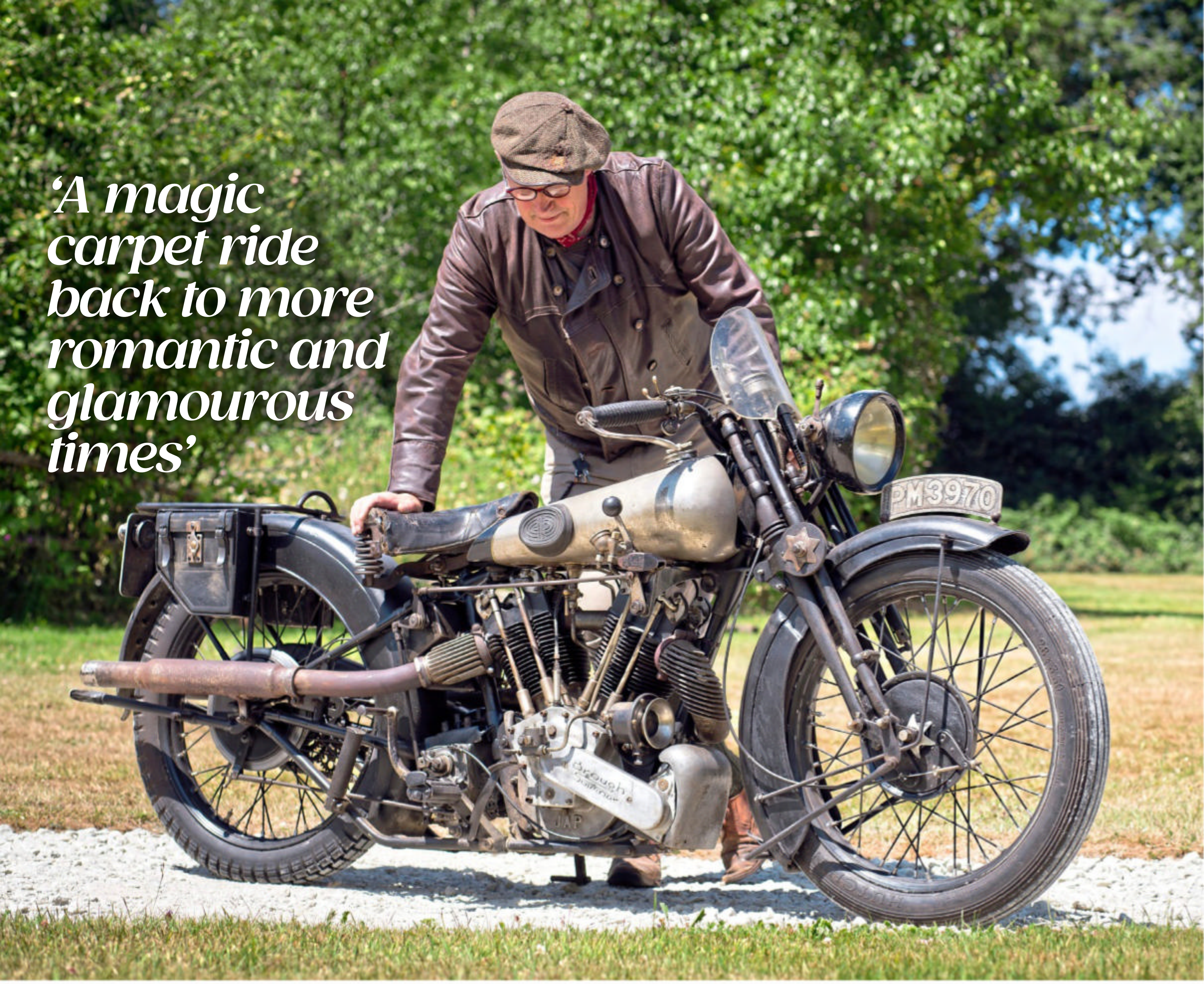
But this bike is different. It's much easier to see the true beauty in a machine when it's not pompadoured by magpie twinkle – this time, I like what I see. This SS100 is remarkably untouched for an insanely collectable bike, almost a century old. It's lived in Sussex for all its days and the reasons why (see left) offer a fascinating insight into the curious complexities in an old bike's life.

Although not restored, it has been reconditioned, by Brough specialist Simon Miles down here in the South East. Simon found evidence of a gearbox blow-up that he thinks probably took the bike off the road. The engine needed a bottom end rebuild and cylinder head recondition – including reinstalling the unusual multi-valve spring layout used then by JAP racing engines and specified on the bike's works record card. However, the cylinders only needed honing to remove

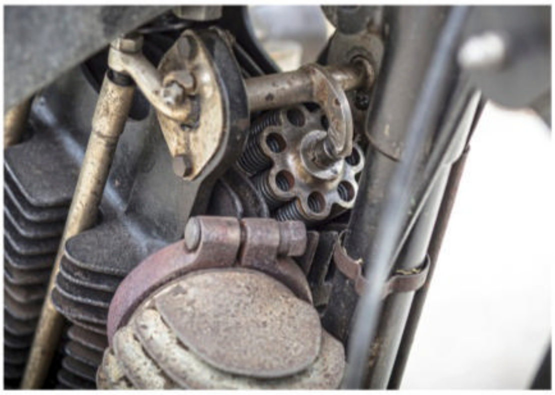
RIGHT Rick's not a fan of blingy Broughs, but this one struck a chord

BELOW Bonniksen Isochronous speedo is a classy thing - and those big numbers are entirely necessary





‘A magic carpet ride back to more romantic and glamourous times’



LEFT 1000cc JAP KTOR valves are supported by seven small springs around the stem

LEFT If bystanders don’t hear the engine, they’ll certainly hear the horn

light corrosion marks. Chassis-wise all was good, with just new fork springs needed as they’d rusted and broken. Says Simon: “I’d spent years gathering up original parts to go on this bike and one of the best was a brand new Hutchinson Cord front tyre of the correct 3.50 x 28 size. It’s unusual and I picked it up a long time ago, but at last it’s gone onto exactly the right bike.”

There’s not much danger of wearing out its tread. The small front brake is hardly a tyre squealer, although the eight-inch finned Enfield rear is pretty good with its rubber-buffer cush drive. It’s the same design adopted by Japanese bikes and smooths the harshness as the big twin engine hauls on its chains. I may not be a Brough lover, but I have to admit on these quiet Sussex lanes, still fairly free from the selfish brutality of the 21st century, it offers a very believable magic carpet ride back to more romantic and glamourous times.

TE Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) was George Brough’s best customer. Owning seven Brough Superiors in total, he died on his last one attempting to avoid some schoolboy cyclists. Lawrence was an intelligent, complex and troubled man who found relaxation and relief in fast motorcycles, but aside from the money he spent with the company, he was a World War I celebrity and his enthusiastic letters of commendation made terrific advertising copy. Lawrence’s account

SPECIFICATION | 1926 BROUGH SUPERIOR SS100

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Four-stroke ohv 50° V-twin **Dimensions** 85.7 x 85mm **Capacity** 981cc **Power** 45bhp at 4800rpm **Compression ratio** 6.5:1 **Carburation** Brown and Barlow carburettor **Clutch** Dry multiplate **Gearbox** Three-speed Sturmey-Archer **CHASSIS** **Frame** Brazed lug, tubular steel, single downtube cradle **Front suspension** Friction-damped Brough Superior 'Castle' forks **Rear suspension** None **Brakes** Front: 8in (203mm) Enfield single-leading-shoe drum. Rear: 8in finned Enfield single-leading-shoe drum **Wheels** Spoked, steel rims **Tyres** Front: 3.50 x 28in. Rear: 3.50 x 28in **DIMENSIONS** **Wheelbase** 58in (1473mm) **Weight:** 320lb dry (145kg), estimated **PERFORMANCE** 100mph

of outpacing an RAF aircraft on his SS100 is one of the finest and most inspiring pieces of descriptive motorcycle prose ever written; it lures you into sharing his experience, and his affiliation with the marque has had much to do with its status ever since. And yes, my views are influenced by this mystique… but then isn't that part of what motorcycles are? Weren't Suzuki buyers attracted by Barry Sheene? Image and association with interesting people is a huge part of what makes a motorcycle desirable – while it's fair to say George Brough clearly had a flair for 'marketing' at a time when everybody else thought it meant wheeling a barrow of vegetables down to the town square, his was not today's cynical target-based selling.

George was an enthusiast and competition rider who built the bike he thought people wanted to ride – and I think he got it about right. Sure, only the tank and frame are unique to Brough. It may have Brampton forks, Enfield hubs, JAP engine and a Sturmey-Archer gearbox, but BSA and Rudge were the only '20s firms I can think of who made everything themselves. Everyone else bought in components and their choice was often based on who offered the best deal. George, with his officially-sanctioned 'Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles', not only had a reputation to protect. His position gave him influence beyond his weight with suppliers that ensured he got preferential treatment – engines with a little more power, brake drums with cast-in cooling fins and so on. His enthusiasm for riding meant that if you wanted something special, he'd make sure you got it because he understood *why* you wanted it. That level of bespoke service would be suicidal for a small manufacturer who made everything in-house, so buyers were happy.

I'm happy too. I've enjoyed my short time on the SS100. It really is something special. I've spent my life justifying riding classic bikes, even though in bare facts modern bikes are obviously better. I don't care. I'd rather stay in my fantasy world – and riding this amazing Brough made it real for a little while.

ABOVE The SS100 lopes along like a big cat. Few bikes match its feel

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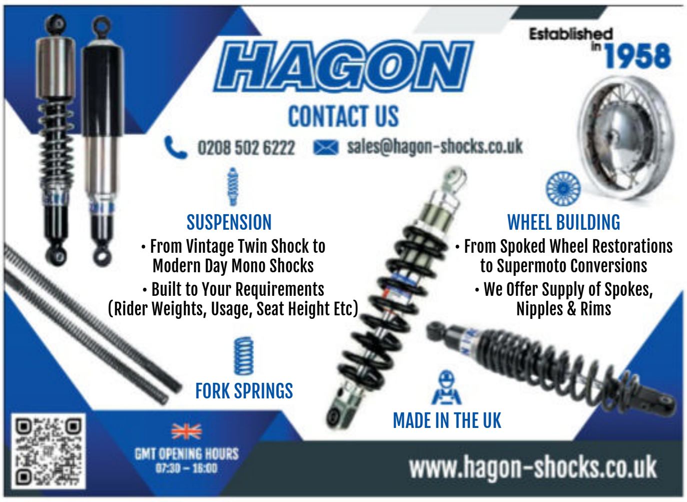

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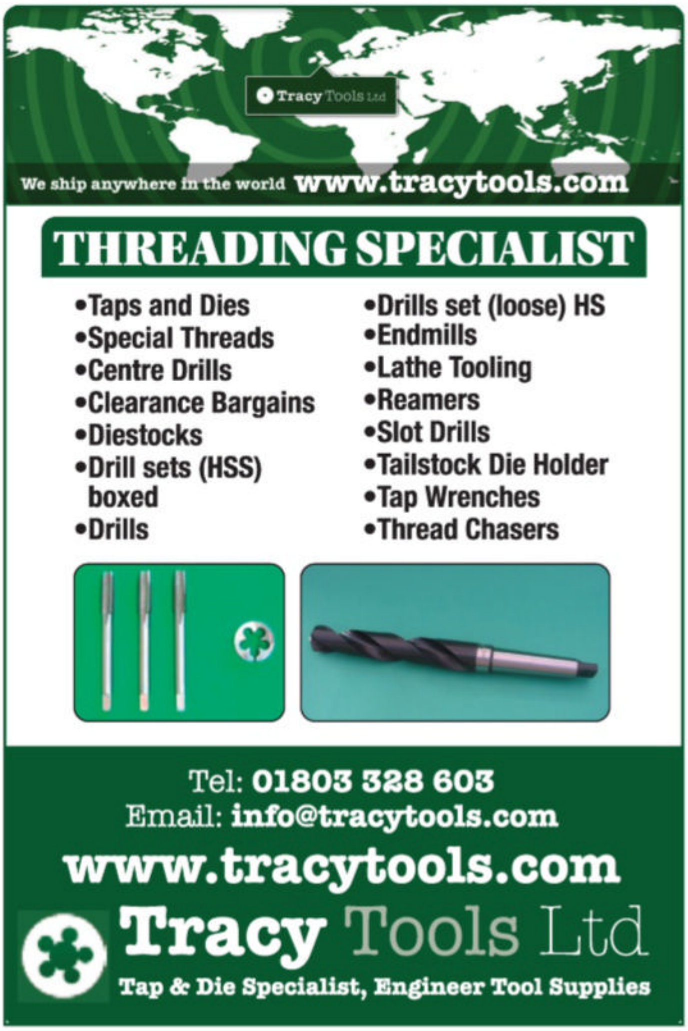

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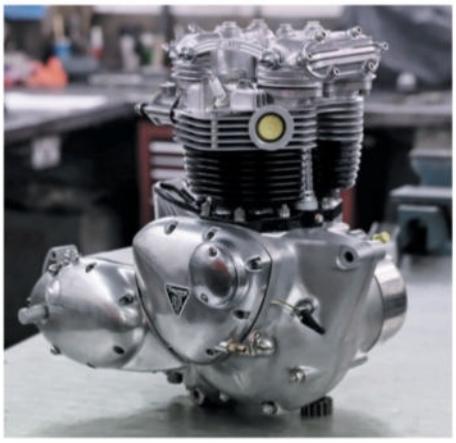

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Yamaha's air-cooled **RD250** and **RD400** offer similar but different ways to get your two-stroke kicks. Here's how to find a corker

Words: **GEZ KANE** Photography: **RORY GAME, JOHN NOBLE, BAUER ARCHIVE**

With their angular 'coffin tank' styling and bold speed-block graphics borrowed from their all-conquering factory racers, Yamaha's RD250C and the 350-replacing RD400C fitted perfectly into the rapidly changing '70s. And they proved an instant hit.

Ride either of the air-cooled twin-cylinder two-strokes today and you'll understand why. The 250 thrives on revs, with a crisp gearchange that makes keeping the robust engine spinning in the thick of its powerband engaging and fun. Fairly basic suspension can make the ride a little lively on less than perfect surfaces, but handling is actually rather good on smooth roads – especially on modern tyres. Even the brakes are decent.

And while the RD250 is fun, the 400 is appreciably better. Surprisingly torquey, it's perfectly at home in stop/start traffic – and when hurled at proper roads the zinging 400 really will put a smile on your face. With essentially the same chassis as the 250, the handling isn't any different to its fellow lightweight – but the extra midrange grunt and additional dollop of power of the longer-stroke 498cc engine can really be felt.

Get the revs up over 6500rpm and things really start to happen quickly, the RD400 darting out of corners chased by a tearing soundtrack. It's easy to see why this bike cleaned up in 500-class production racing back in the late '70s.

If you like zippy performance two-strokes, this brace of RDs will be right up your street. Their simplicity and ease of maintenance is a major attraction for either of them. Sure, the RD400 is measurably faster, but the 250 is still great fun to ride – it's fast enough for most of us and significantly more affordable. Both will immerse you in a brash, crackling fountain of youth.

THE BIG QUESTION

What price originality?

It's a strange irony that, when the coffin-tanked RD first hit the road in 1976, the first thing many owners did was ditch many of the parts that are now highly sought-after – replacing them with aftermarket bits.

Paul Dawkins, machine dating officer for the Air Cooled RD Club, admits his guilt.

"I never used to care whether a bike was standard or not," he says. "As long as it went well, that was all that mattered. Now though, most buyers will pay a premium for a catalogue-correct machine – but there are very few of them around.

"The parts to put modified bikes back to standard are very hard to find and expensive as well. There are some decent pattern rear mudguards about, but exhausts are a different matter. I saw a full RD400E/F system sell for £2500 not long ago, and a decent original rear mudguard would probably make £350-400.

"If you want an absolutely original specification RD, they are out there. But you'll probably have to pay £2000-3000 more than for a tidy rider with a few aftermarket parts.

"I did restore an RD400C and an F model myself a few years ago, but I ended up being afraid to ride them in case I damaged them. That must tell you something..."

What to look for

Bodywork

As with many '70s bikes, original tinware and other parts are getting scarce. Check the rear of the tank – they can crack around the mounting. Good pattern mudguards are available, but seats can be hard to source – and pricey if you manage to find them. Good foams and covers are available, but check the seat base for corrosion and damage.

Oil pump

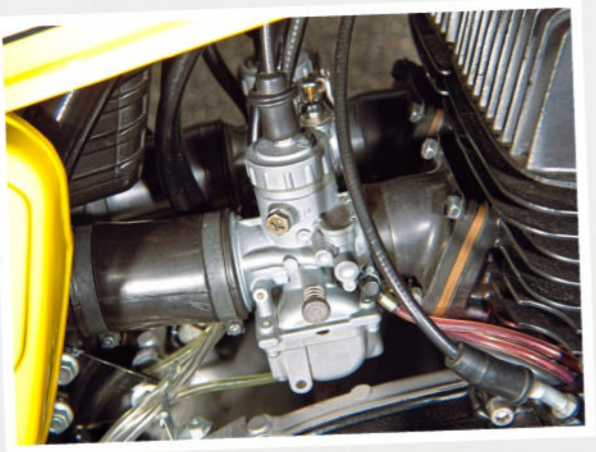
If a bike has been rebuilt or built from parts sourced from different donor bikes, it's worth checking the oil pump. The 400 models have a different (higher output) pump to the 250s. The 400 pumps were marked at the factory with a dab of blue paint on one of the pump body mounting screws.

Exhausts

Genuine NOS exhaust systems are exceedingly rare now – and when they do turn up, they're eye-wateringly expensive. Check original pipes and silencers carefully for damage and rattling, because the baffles can come loose. Stinkwheel and Higgspeed produce expansion chamber-type systems. If a bike has aftermarket pipes and perhaps foam filters, ask about carb jetting and set-up.

Engine

Generally solid and reliable. Four-bearing crank soaks up hard use impressively, but check for up-and-down play in the main bearing on the alternator rotor side. The E and F models have a heavier rotor, which can accelerate wear. Make sure the engine's easy to start, with rapid power pick-up and no excessive smoking – all possible signs of crank seals on the way out. Assume the odometer reading to be irrelevant – the engine will almost certainly have had work carried out at some point.



RESOURCES

Yambits
Go-to parts suppliers for classic Yamahas; tons in stock for air-cooled RD models.
yambits.co.uk

Air Cooled RD Club
Established in 1994, with around 500 members. Lively forum, bags of expertise and a legendary annual rally.
aircooledrdclub.com

Stinkwheels/Gibson Exhausts
Engine rebuilds, full restorations and replacement exhaust systems.
gibsonexhausts.co.uk

Taymar Motorcycles
Hugely well respected Yamaha two-stroke twins specialists. Based in Kent, with a full range of mechanical services.
taymar-racing.co.uk

Higgspeed
Blackpool-based manufacturer of hand-crafted, two-stroke exhaust systems.
higgspeed.com

Engine mountings

The engine on the RD400 is rubber-mounted and the bushes harden with age. Check for any excessive vibration. Remanufactured replacement bushes are still available, though.

Ignition

Accurate ignition timing is vital on RDs. Too much advance and you risk a holed piston (as I know from bitter experience). Modern electronic ignition is a worthwhile upgrade for pre-1978 points ignition models.

TURN
NEUTRAL
mph
RPMx1000
HIGH BEAM
YAMAHA
YAMAHA

SPECIFICATION YAMAHA RD250 (400)

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled two-stroke parallel twin
Dimensions	54 x 54mm (64 x 62mm)
Capacity	247cc (398cc)
Output	30bhp at 7500rpm (40bhp at 7000rpm)
Compression ratio	6.7:1 (6.2:1)
Carburation	2 x 28mm Mikunis
Clutch	Wet multiplate
Gearbox	Six speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular steel double cradle
Front suspension	34mm tele forks
Rear suspension	Twin shocks
Brakes front/rear	265mm disc/180mm sls drum (265mm disc front and rear)
Wheels	Cast alloy
Tyres	3.00 x 18in front, 3.50 x 18in rear
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	1334mm (52.5in)
Weight	150kg (157kg)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	103mph

Good news – RD400s like this are much more affordable than a few years ago

Which to buy, what to pay...

Getting into RDs comes down to the thickness of your wallet. If money is no object, who wouldn't want the front wheel-lifting urge of the 400 and the lift in street cred from having the 'big one'? After all, when *Bike* magazine tested the RD400 back in 1976, they described it as 'the optimal air-cooled two-stroke'. And it surely still is nigh-on 50 years later.

Thing is, the extra zip and swagger of the 400 comes at a cost. Just three or four years ago, prices of 400s had reached alarming highs (alarming, at least, if you fancied owning one). Top quality examples were changing hands at well over £10,000.

You can still find plenty of RD400s being offered with similarly lofty price tags today, although a trawl through sold prices reveals that values have fallen back to more affordable levels. Which is great news if you're looking to buy.

A mint, standard E or F model 400 – the most sought-after versions – will rarely top £7000 these days. If you're not bothered by (or if you want) expansion chamber exhausts and don't mind pattern bodywork, bikes in good mechanical and cosmetic condition will be somewhere between £5000 and £6000. That's still a lot of money – but you'll be getting one of the most exciting and best-looking middleweights of its generation. An icon.

RD in speed-block yellow: an all-time classic combo

And then there's the RD250. It's also bags of fun to ride – with the same looks, sound and aura – and yet appreciably cheaper than a 400. Think £3500 for a good one, or maybe less for a tinkered-with bike (which you could then spruce up even more by fitting air-cooled RD350 barrels and pistons).

> 'One of the most exciting middleweights of its generation'

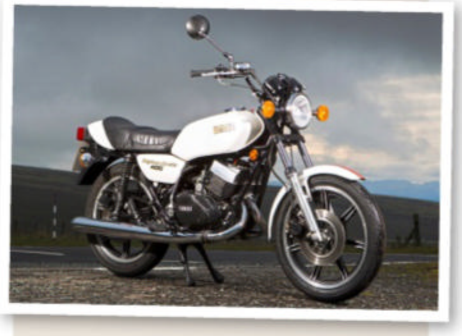
Project bikes can be a complex equation, whether it's a 250 or 400. If your plan is to turn a scruffy non-runner into a show-standard brochure lookalike, you're in for a lot of work and monstrous expense. Truthfully, it probably isn't worth trying.

MODEL HISTORY

1976 The new RD250C arrives, and is joined by the RD400C which replaces the RD350. Both versions of the RD feature the new squarer-styled 'coffin' tank. Cast alloy wheels are an option on the 400, which also gets a disc rear brake.

1977 Disc rear brake fitted to the RD250D. Alloy wheels become standard on both models.

1978 Electronic ignition fitted to both the RD250E and RD400E. Both models now have 35mm forks. Porting and exhaust revisions for the 400 boost claimed power to 44bhp.



1979 RD250F and RD400F are the last of the air-cooled line, with detail changes only. US-market RD400 Daytona model, with ram-air cowls on the cylinder head and revised styling, is released (above).

Replica exhaust pipes for the 400s have never been available – the downpipes are a different diameter at each end and would be difficult to manufacture. Paul Dawkins has seen a mint pair make £700. Yes, just the downpipes. However, if you fancy a bike that looks like most RDs actually did in period, then a project (around £1500-2000 for a 250, about 500 quid more for a 400) might make sense.

RDs are easy to work on, with horizontally-split crankcases, pinned main bearings and ribs on the crank seals that locate in grooves on the crankcase mating faces, making engine rebuilds easy. A crank rebuild and rebore are probably the only jobs you'll have to outsource.

You could have a thoroughly enjoyable winter in the shed and end up with a fun, stylish, practical classic '70s stroker for £3000 or so. Sounds good to us.

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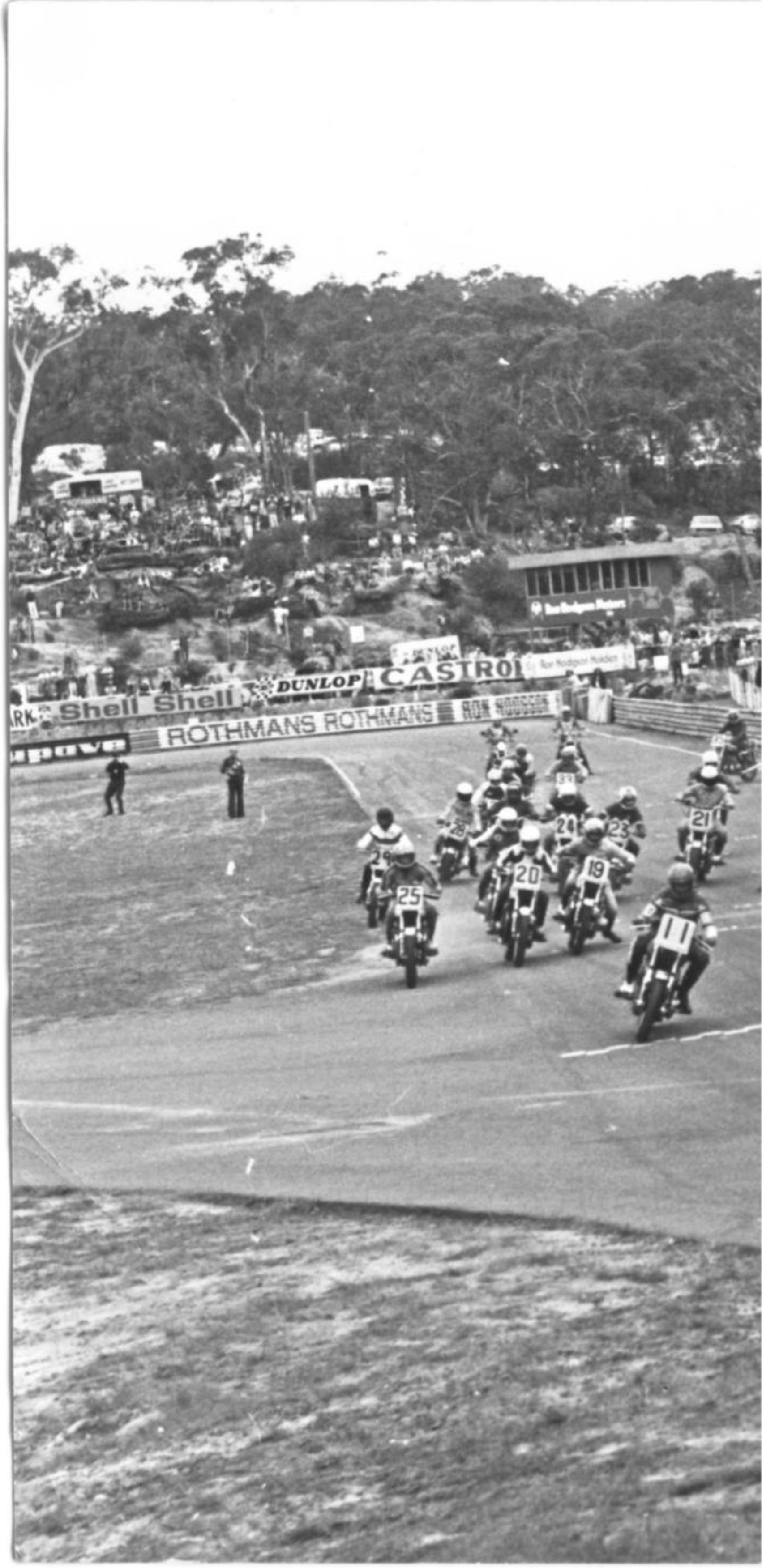
Test of mettle

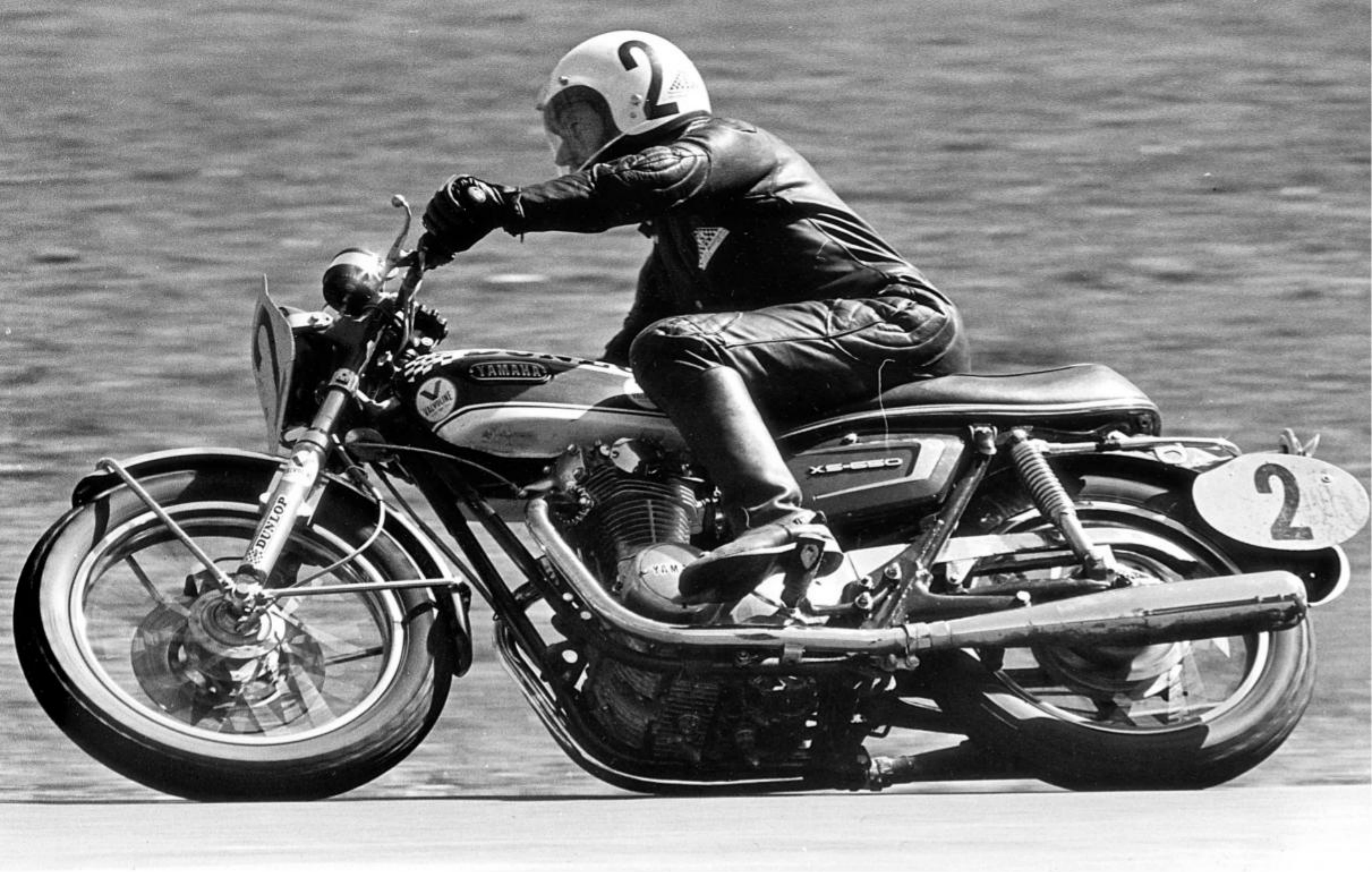
Australia's **Castrol 6-Hour endurance race** was an annual fixture around this time of year from 1970-87. Run to strict production rules, spectators enjoyed packed grids, fierce racing and a great spectacle. These shots from the *Classic Bike* archive reveal the gritty history of the event



Every man for himself

Amaroo Park Raceway was the home of the Castrol 6-Hour from its inception in 1970 to 1983. The spectator-friendly 1.199-mile circuit was set in the undulating terrain of a natural amphitheatre 25 miles north-east of Sydney. This startline shot from 1975 conveys the atmosphere of the place, with the freeform fan viewpoints contrasting with the strictly regulated racing on track. The smoke from Warren Willing's Kawasaki 750 H2 (#3) isn't the best advert for Castrol's clean burning two-stroke oil, but the two-stroke triples figured strongly in the early years. Willing and John Boote had finished second on a H2 in 1973, and Mike Steele and Dave Burgess had won the race in 1972. The 1975 race was won by a Kawasaki Z1 ridden by Greg Hansford (#5), who went on to have a distinguished international career. After he quit riding, Warren Willing worked as a race engineer for Kenny Roberts, helping Wayne Rainey to three World Championships.

ROTHMANS
AMAROO PARK · CONTROL TOWER
AMA
Castrol 6-Hour

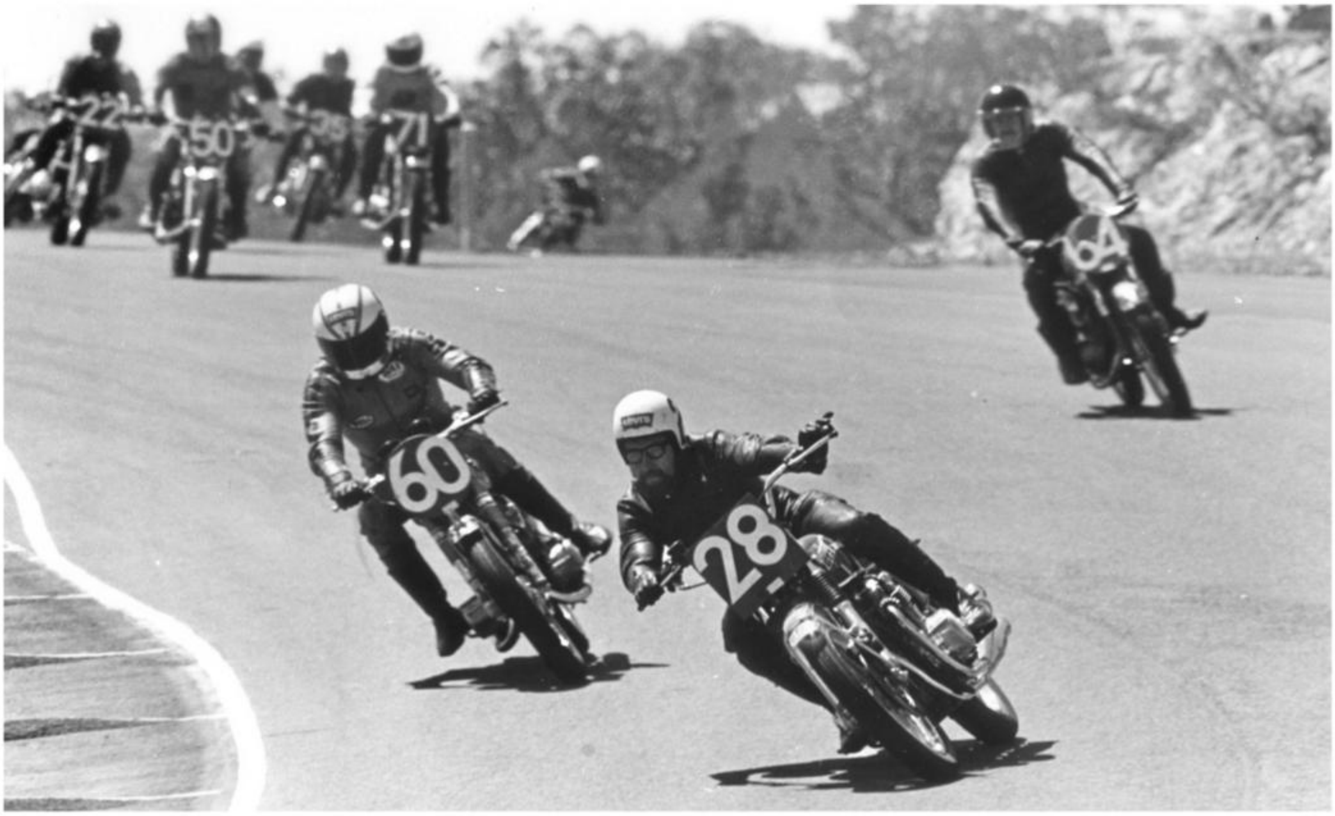


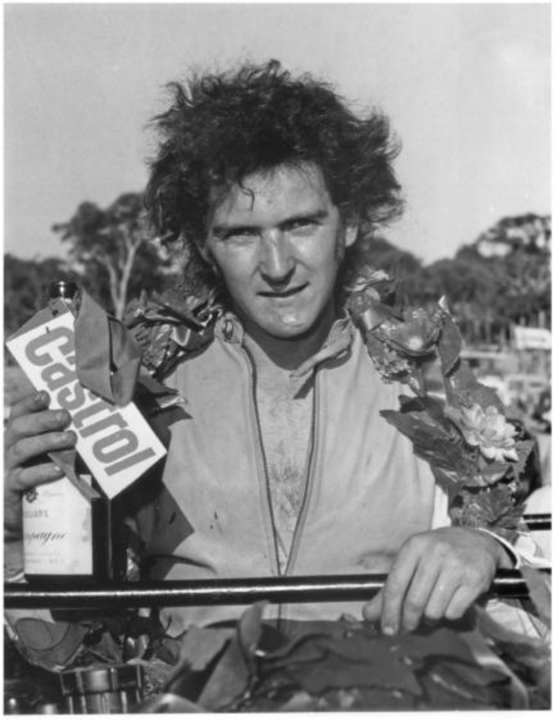
Hard men, cast iron rules

▲ Road tyres had to be used, and handlebars and footrests couldn't be changed. Scrutineering was tough – one team was disqualified for not having a horn. Ground clearance was a real problem for 1970s road bikes, as shown by the footrest on this Yamaha XS650. And tyre management was an issue. Tony Hatton and Paul Spooner, riding this bike, finished second in 1971 as the nine Honda CB750s that filled out the top ten made lengthy stops to change rear tyres. The lower-powered, lighter Yamaha did 330 laps on a single set of Dunlop TT100s.

Cornering without grinding

▼ Maintaining the right line was compromised by attempting to stop the bike's scraping undercarriage from lifting the wheels off the tarmac. We have no record of the names of these riders from the 1971 race, but we very much like the style of the Honda CB750 rider (#28). We think they're entering the downhill Dunlop Loop at Amaroo. The first ever race in 1970 commenced with a chaotic multi-bike crash, although bad accidents were not commonplace, despite there being up to 50 bikes on track.





Going all the way

▲ In the early years of the race, a few riders attempted to ride the whole six hours solo – but the only person ever to win on his own was Aussie legend Kenny Blake (above) in 1973, when he gave the Kawasaki Z1 its first victory after covering 342 laps. He won twice more – although riding with partners – in 1974 and '77, also finishing second twice (once riding solo) as well as scoring a third and a fourth. Two of the wins were on Kawasaki 900s, with one on a BMW R100S. Kenny also partnered Ron Haslam on the ill-fated Honda CB1100R in 1980. Tragically, he was killed at the Isle of Man the following year.

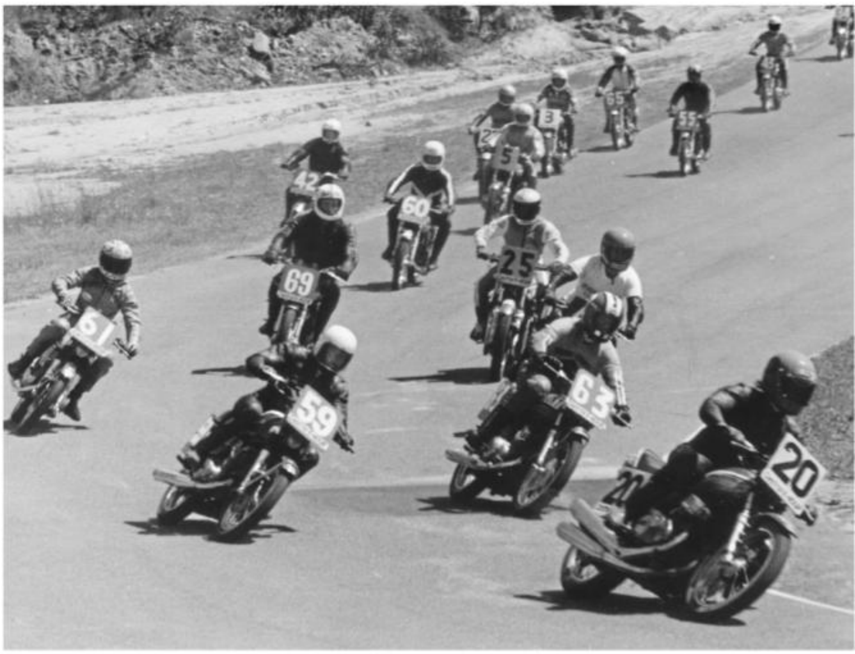
Castrol
SUPER
TWO-STROKE OIL
Castrol

The promotion of lubrication

▲ Originally the race was called the Castrol 1000, on account of the top prize of 1000 Australian dollars provided by the race sponsor. Naturally, a team of suitably-attired young ladies were employed to promote the oil company's products at the venue. The success of the event inspired New Zealand race organisers to put on their own event at the Manfeild Park circuit from 1974, with the same name and sponsor. It ran annually until 1988.

Filtering through traffic

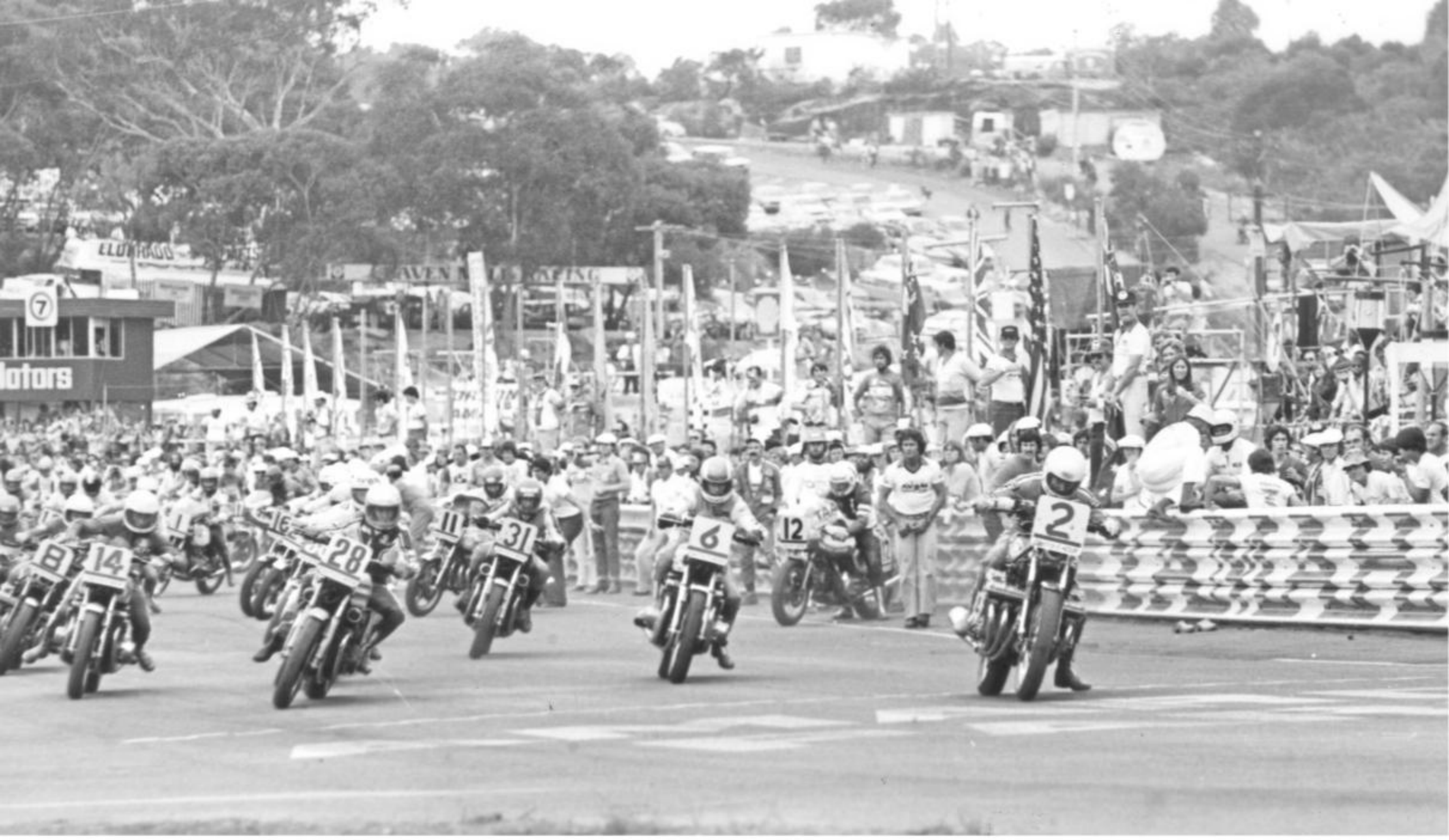
▼ In this first-lap picture at Honda Corner in 1973, Kenny Blake (#5) is back in the pack, having been last away at the start. Number 25 is Mick Grant, who was racing another Kawasaki 900 partnered by Percy Tait. Negotiating the on-track congestion on the Amaroo Park circuit was always an issue – especially in the early years when the race included a 250cc class.



Face of fearlessness

▼ This study in grim determination focuses on another Aussie bike racing hero – Jack Ahearn. He started racing bikes immediately after World War II and by the mid-'50s was in Europe, racing in Grand Prix as part of the travelling Continental Circus. On a Norton Manx, he was runner-up to Mike Hailwood in the 1964 500cc World Championship, although he gave up on Europe and returned home in 1967. But he kept on racing. Aged 46 in 1970, he finished the first Castrol 6-Hour race riding a Triumph Bonneville 650. In this shot from the 1973 race, he's pictured riding a Norton Commando 750 Interstate. He reckoned he could do two hours on the Norton's five-gallon tank, and that the engine's flexibility meant that he could lap Amaroo Park with two gearchanges per lap. After crashing out of the race in 1974, he finally quit. A Triumph Bonneville ridden by Len Atlee and Brian Hindle had won the first six hour in 1970, but that was the only British win.

37
18
Castrol 6-HOUR



The superbikes weigh in

▲ By the late '70s, all the Japanese manufacturers were fully engaged in the superbike market and desperate for 6-Hour success. 1978 saw the Amaroo Park debut of the Honda CBX1000, Suzuki GS1000 and Yamaha XS1100. Against expectations, it was the 95bhp, 598lb Yamaha that won the battle, ridden by Roger Heyes and Jim Budd. That's partly because the Avon team could perform a mid-race rear tyre change in around a minute on the shaft-drive Yam, while the same operation took nearly five minutes on the Hondas. At the start it was Graeme Crosby on the Honda (#2) who led from pole before retiring, leaving Mick Cole and Dennis Neil (#3) to uphold six-cylinder honour. The winning Yamaha was a slow starter – but not as slow as the Ducati 900SS (#12) of John Warriman and Terry Kelly, which had to be kickstarted. But the Italian bike had a longer fuel range and didn't require a tyre change, so it beat the Honda CBX to second place.

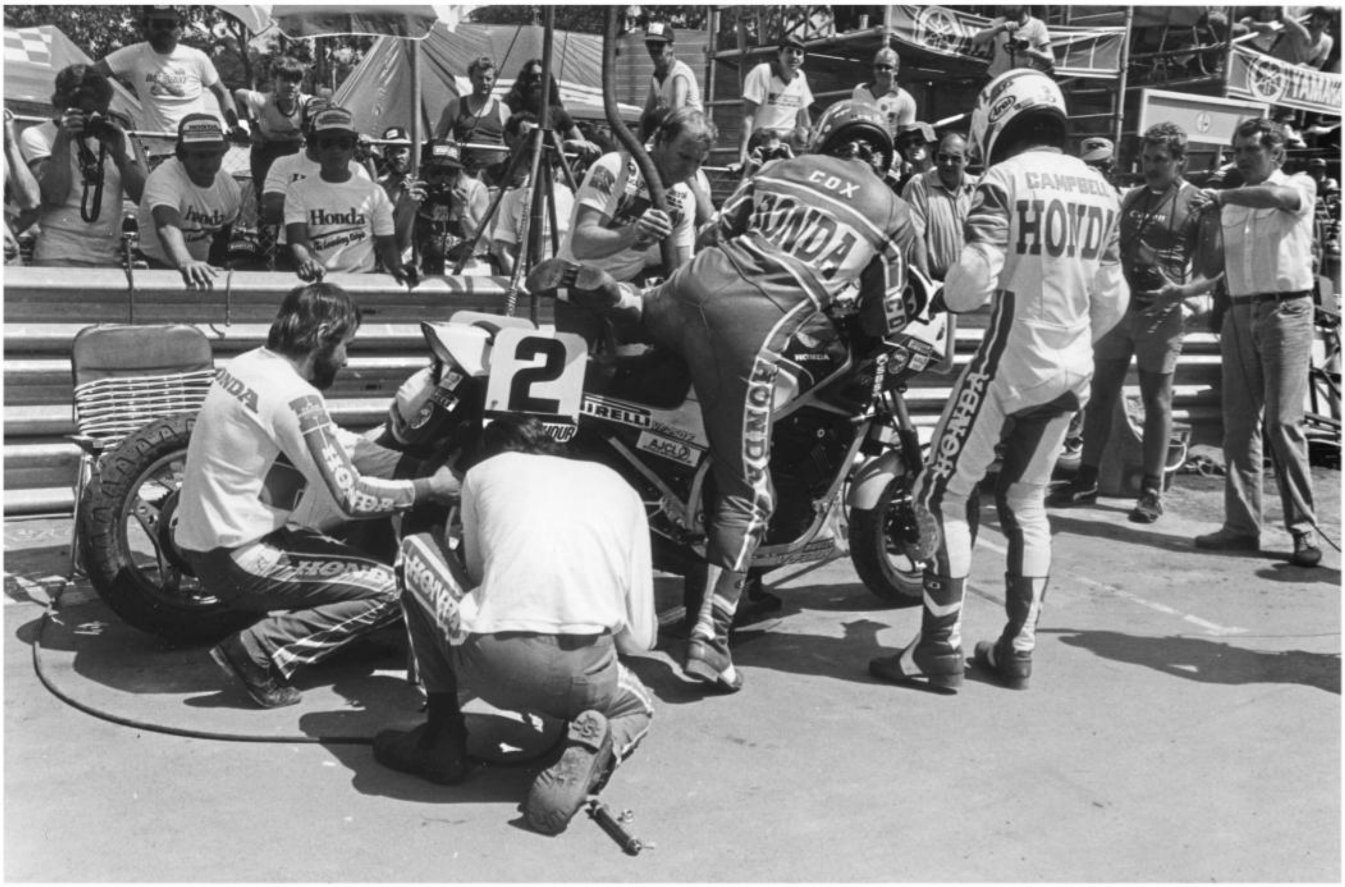
BLAKE
2
Castrol 6-HOUR

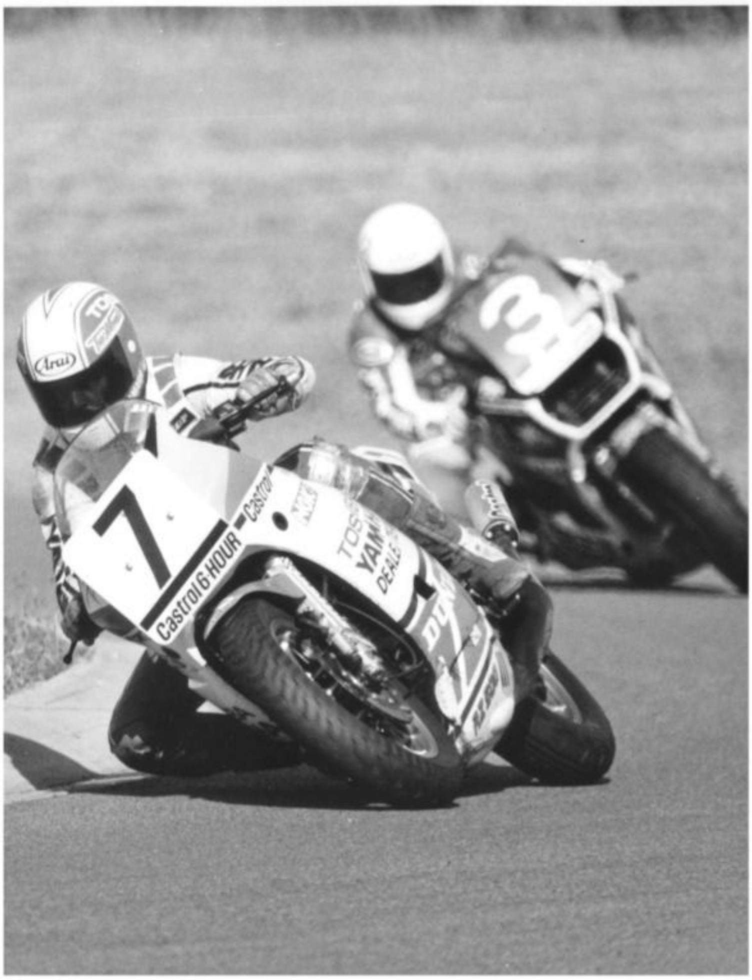
Wayne wins in the wet

▲ Things were turned up a notch when Honda produced the limited-production CB1100R in 1980, apparently aimed at winning the 6-Hour. Among the riders was 21-year-old Wayne Gardner, teamed with Andrew Johnson. It rained solidly for the first four and a half hours – but Gardner barely noticed, leading from the start and at one point pulling out a two-lap lead. The 1100R was banned in 1981, apparently since it had no pillion seat. With a modified seat, they were allowed back in 1982 and Gardner won again – this time, in dry conditions, he and his partner did an extra 42 laps.

That wasn't in the plan

◀ Honda also provided a CB1100R for Ron Haslam to ride with Kenny Blake, who'd gained experience racing with the Honda France endurance team. They must have been confident of a good result, but their bike didn't handle in the wet – Ken struggled in the first session, then Ron crashed in the second. After limping back the pits for repairs, they rejoined the fray on the battered bike.





V4 takes victory

▲ Seven of the top ten qualifiers for the 1983 race were on the new Honda VF750F, running on their choice of Metzeler, Pirelli or Dunlop rubber. Variations in compound meant that the big question was how many tyre changes each team would attempt. Some were opting for a new tyre at every stop. Malcolm Campbell and Rod Cox (here in the pits) won the race, with second place taken by Rob Phillis (soon to become a Superbike star) and Geoff French. The previous year's winner, Wayne Gardner, who'd flown back from England for the race, didn't get to ride after his co-rider wrecked the bike on lap one. Graeme Crosby crashed out late in the race. Roger Heyes and Rob Holden were third on a Suzuki GSX1000 Katana, but after six hours the top three were all on 372 laps.

David beats Goliath

◀ For the 1984 race, the venue switched to Oran Park, just south of Sydney, with spectators treated to what one commentator called 'The most exciting 6-Hours in history'. It was a David and Goliath struggle between the 186kg, 80bhp Yamaha RZ500 (the alloy-framed version of the two-stroke RD500LC) and the 250kg, 130bhp Honda VF1000R. Both bikes had top-flight riders, with Richard Scott (pictured) and Michael Dowson on the Yamaha, and John Pace (second in the picture, on the Honda) with Wayne Gardner. The two bikes were this close, occasionally swapping positions, for most of the second half of the race, with the smaller bike eventually crossing the line first. It was the first two-stroke victory since a Kawasaki 750 won in 1972 – and also the last. The race was last run in 1987, becoming a victim of rising costs.

ROCK OIL
ROCK OIL
ROCK OIL
ROCK OIL
ROCK OIL
24
82
78
59

How do you go from this...

POWER
PRECISION
PARTNERSHIP
MAXU
37

Steve's firm HM Racing prep the engines for BSB support series the BMW F 900 R Cup

...to this?

HARLEY-DAVIDSON XR 750

The flip side of his coin is a personal infatuation with old Harleys like these

Steve with his self-built XR lookalike. He clearly loves his Hogs

Steve Smith has spent 35 years tuning and building modern superbikes for top flight competition – but now he's obsessed with air-cooled pushrod American twins. We ask him how and why

WORDS **ALAN SEELEY** PHOTOGRAPHY **JOE LANDEN**

One minute you're extracting every last ounce of power from a cutting-edge 1000cc Superstock racer. Next thing you know, you're fiddling with a classic air-cooled Harley-Davidson pushrod twin with an eighth of the power. The starkness of the contrast is not lost on Steve Smith. His motorcycling odyssey has been long and varied, mingling different mechanical and racing disciplines.

By 1990, Steve had established something of a reputation for himself on self-tuned long track, grasstrack and speedway machines. His were the bikes to catch. "I'd been preparing my own engines for competition, then other people kept asking me to do work for them. Gradually it took over," says the now 64-year-old Steve. This led to him founding HM Racing (not to be confused with the HM Plant-sponsored superbike teams of the Noughties).

The nascent HM Racing concern focused on oval track work up until about 1994, when Steve decided to broaden his horizons. "I was keen to get involved with modern road and race bike technology, so, I bought a dyno for the business and started tuning bikes for road racing, trackdays and fast road riding."

The firm's new broader focus would lead to top-flight involvement in British Superbikes, working with the likes of TAG Racing and Tommy Hill's team. Superstock 1000 engines became a house speciality, too. More recently, HM have been responsible for tuning the engines used in the BMW F 900 R Cup, a support series at rounds of British Superbikes.

ABOVE Old Harleys like the WLA are well served for parts, with OE and good repro stuff readily available

All that high-speed performance tech is some way away from the iron age, iron head Harley-Davidsons that have been Steve's more recent obsession. So, we asked him to explain himself.

"In December 1990, I was doing ice speedway and went to a world championship meeting in Finland," says Steve. "Mike Baldwin, the four-time AMA F1 champion and 500GP contender was there – he'd been fourth in 500GPs on a Team Roberts Lucky Strike Yamaha YZR500 in 1986. By the time I met him, he was riding a Bimota YB4 for Diesel Jeans in World Superbikes. Unusually, given the risks, Mike's contract with Diesel allowed him to ice race in the winter. Hence his presence in Finland.

"He invited me to come to the States as his guest and try US ice racing, which is more like flat-track than ice speedway. The first thing I saw when we went into his garage at home was a Harley WLA. It was love at first sight – I thought it was amazing.

"Mike said you can have as much fun at 50mph on a WLA as you can with bikes many times faster. It's a total handful to ride, with a foot clutch and hand shift. The front brake lever is on the 'wrong' side of the bars. Although the throttle is on the right, there's also an advance/retard twistgrip on the left. You have to keep your wits about you. I caught the bug there and then, although it would be 20 years before I got my own."

FAR RIGHT Steve's Lightweight WLA was inspired by the hordes of ex-WWII bikes adapted into flat-track racers

1942 Harley-Davidson WLA

Here is that first WLA Steve bought 14 years ago, from English specialist War Department, after the founder died and his son was selling up.

The WLA was manufactured in and around the World War II years, with 900,000 being made. It was based on the civilian WL model. 'W' stands for what was then the latest version of the firm's 45 cubic inch (737cc) flathead side-valve 25bhp engine; 'L' represents high compression – even if the figure of 5:1 seems low in more modern terms. 'A' is for 'Army'.

"I think this bike was featured in issue 11 of *Wheels and Tracks* magazine in 1985. Although I can't prove it, I'm pretty sure this is it," says Steve.

"It was all together, but needed quite a bit of sorting out. What was so appealing was its originality. I rebuilt the three-speed gearbox, overhauled the top ends and did bits and pieces to the chassis. There are loads of aftermarket reproduction spares available, but this one has 99% genuine, original components. Many OE spares are still out there, often in the wrappers they came in, although they are getting thinner on the ground. On the other hand, there's some original stuff you can't get, such as speedos and exhausts. An original speedo might fetch £1000 now.

"My aim was to keep the bike looking as unaltered as possible, so I avoided a full restoration. Few WLAs survive in military trim, because many of them were civilianised after World War II.

"The 'AFS' legend represents Armed Forces Services, a division based in Texas that trained military personnel. This also points to it being the magazine bike, as I've never seen another with this marking. That's a Thompson submachine gun on the front. Deactivated, I must point out. That would be some road-rage incident...

"Unfortunately, I don't know the bike's complete World War II pedigree. It could have been in the UK since WWII or imported afterwards."

1942 Lightweight WLA

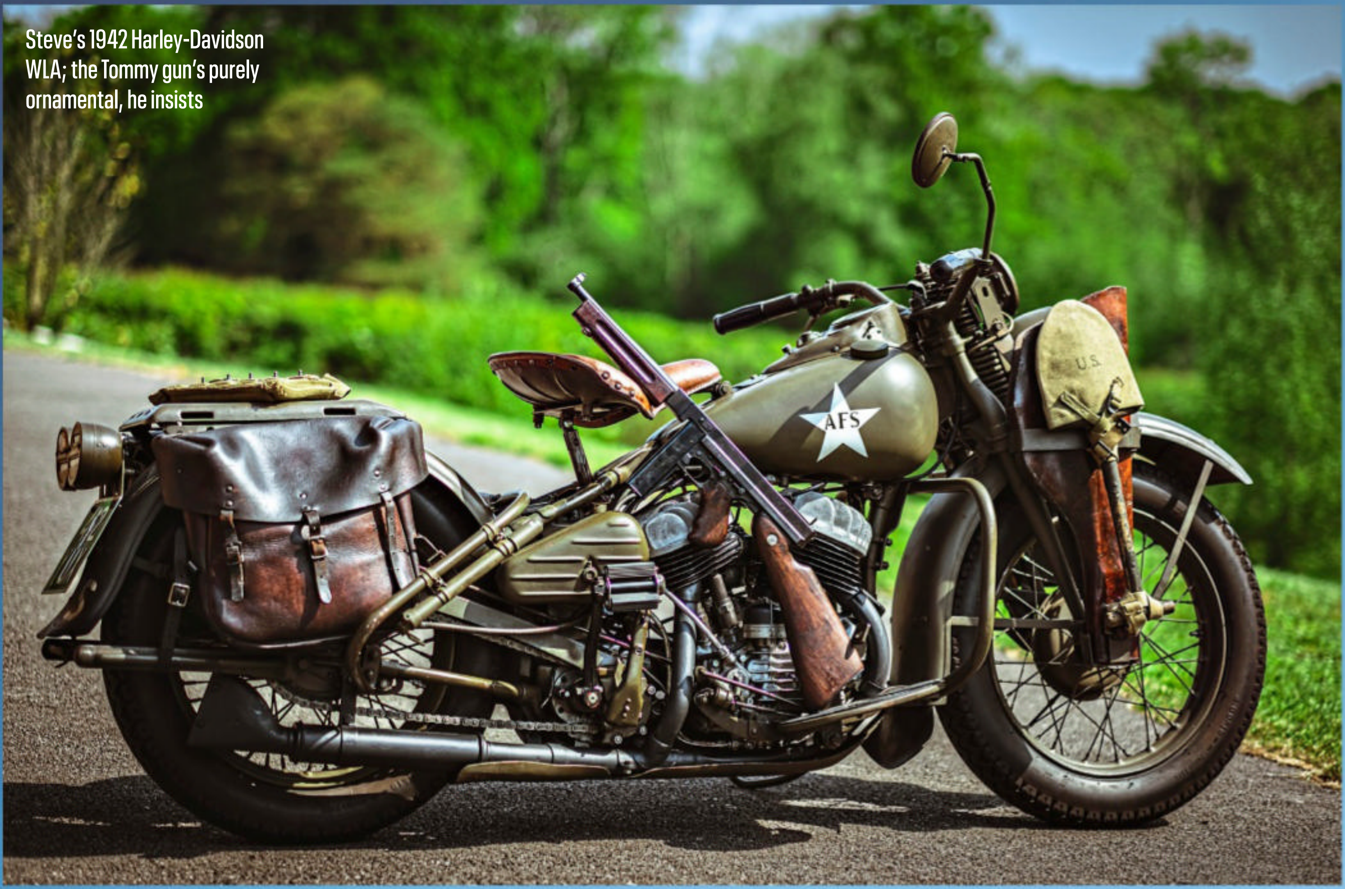
"This one started with a rolling chassis I bought nine years ago, also from War Department," says Steve of his next WLA acquisition. "The engine number dates to 1942. There were no frame numbers on WLAs.

"Originally, I intended to build a WR racer replica. Then I realised the bike had WWII provenance and I didn't want to destroy that. That's why it became a 'Lightweight WLA', inspired by the many thousands of ex-military machines that made their way onto the flat tracks of the US post-WWII.

"It has a WR-type 'suicide' clutch. You push down with your foot to disengage drive, then let it up to go – the opposite of a WLA clutch. There are none of the military trimmings and it has a very short rear mudguard. It doesn't really fit into any category. I wanted to build something personal to myself, without destroying the value of it by hacking the frame.

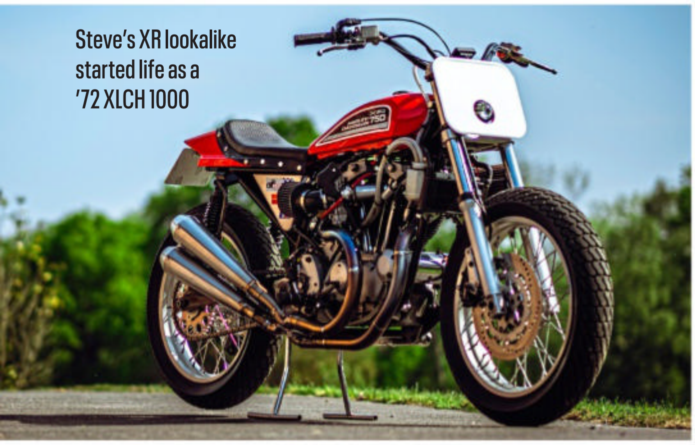
"The engine, gearbox, clutch, frame, forks, primary cover, handlebars, controls, rims and hubs are all original H-D. But the tanks, exhaust, battery box, mudguard and headlight are reproduction – they all

RIGHT Lightweight WLA's bare-bones vibe is reflected in the basic electrics



Steve's 1942 Harley-Davidson WLA; the Tommy gun's purely ornamental, he insists

> 'A WLA is a total handful to ride, with a foot clutch and hand shift, but I caught the bug'


Steve's XR lookalike started life as a '72 XLCH 1000

came from Samwel in the Netherlands. Their stuff is great; 45"Store.de in Germany are good, too.

"It's brilliant to ride and runs ever so sweetly. A military spec WLA is very heavy, even before you add a machine gun and so on. This one is a lot lighter to ride.

"All of the Olive Drab paint is actually Cerakote ceramic finish. You have trouble getting the correct level of matte with paint; you also lose a lot of detail. For example, the air cleaner is engraved 'Harley-Davidson' and paint tends to fill that in. Cerakote is only a couple of thou thick, yet is very tough, and the details are preserved. I use Riccardi Classics in Kent for my Cerakote work."

XR lookalike

"The XR was Evel Knievel's preferred stunt iron. They're beautiful bikes. However, the real thing is extremely expensive and, as a pure race bike, they aren't great on the road – there's no starter, not even a kickstart. My aim was to get as close to an XR as I could while making it still rideable on the road.

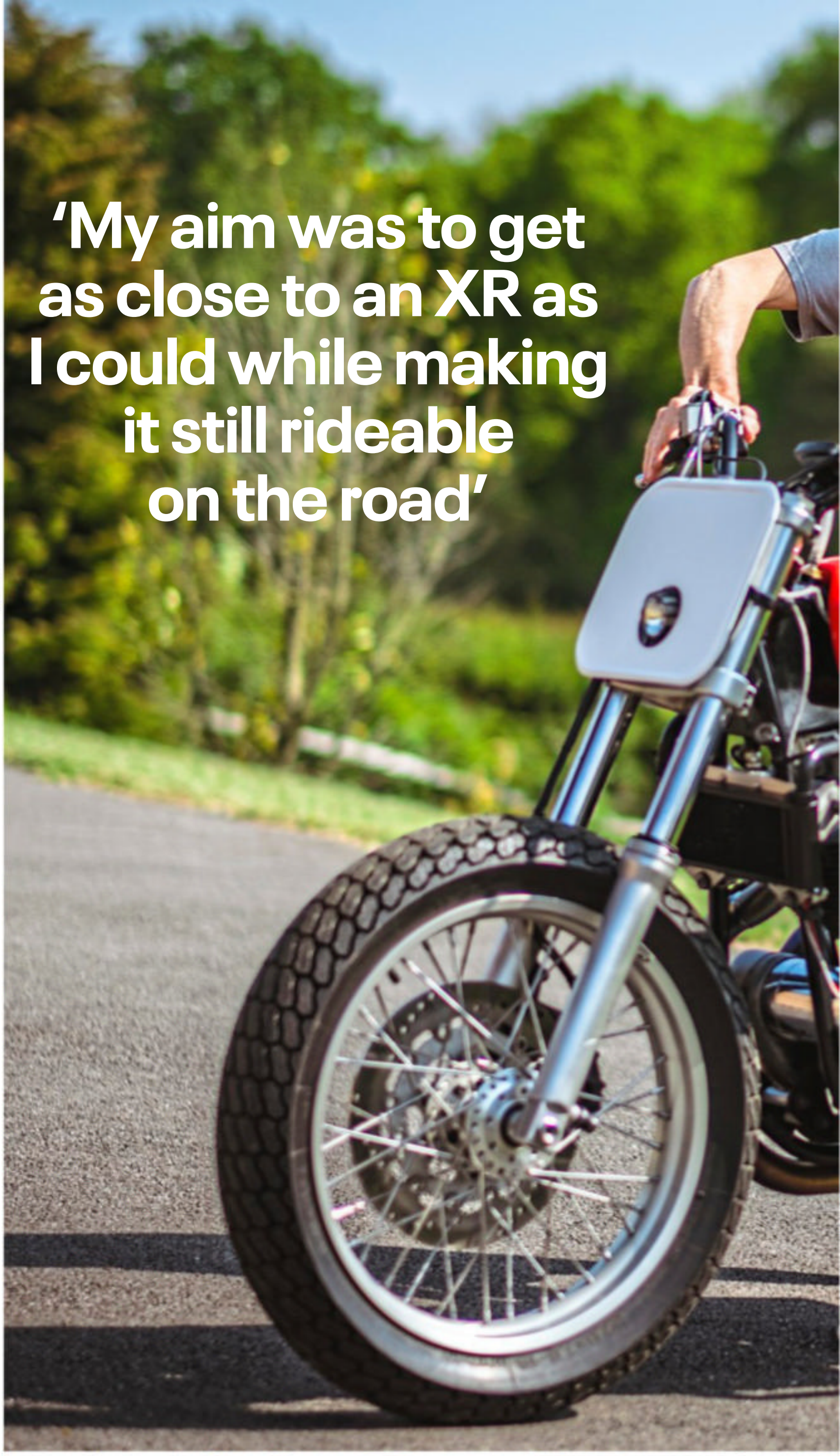
"The build commenced around nine years ago. At first, I just intended to modify the chassis and make a kind of street-tracker – but as I started getting into it, I became increasingly carried away. The only thing remaining from the original donor bike is the engine – and even that has a 1200cc Wiseco big-bore kit.

"The engine in the early iron-head XR750 from 1970 and 1971 is visually close to that from the old XLCH Sportster. So, I bought a 1972 XLCH 1000 as a donor bike.

"I purchased a replica C&J flat-track frame and swingarm from Redmax Speedshop in the West Country. The forks are Yamaha R6 legs in retro yokes, with the mudguard and left-side caliper mounts removed. The original R6 top suspension adjusters are hidden by 'Ceriani'-style top nut covers that I engineered myself.

"The idea was to disguise the upgrades as much as possible. Genuine Cerianis would make it authentic, but they're expensive and would struggle with the weight of the bike. These are 43mm; the XR's Cerianis would have been 35mm, so it's a bit of a visual giveaway for the eagle-eyed. The K-Tech Razor shocks look old, but they perform well.

"The wheels are Sun unpolished rims on 'Barnes'-style knock-on hubs with quick release fasteners, just like a '70s flat tracker would have had. US TT bikes must negotiate left-handers and jumps, so they have front


'My aim was to get as close to an XR as I could while making it still rideable on the road'

XLCH engine is fitted with a 1200cc Wiseco big-bore kit and bellows through this pair of beauties

XR
750
HARLEY-
DAVIDSON
BANKE
K&N

brakes, but straight-up flat-trackers don't. So I didn't consider a front brake to be a spoiler for authenticity. They're Brembo front and rear brakes with Magura slave and master cylinders. The rear brake and shift lever are both on the right in true flat track style."

WR custom race replica

"A couple of years ago, I finally got around to building a mid-1940s WR racer replica. I wanted to create a bike that looked like a new bike from the era, rather than one that had been restored. For this build, I took advantage of the reproduction parts that are available these days – everything is new, aside from the bottom-end of the engine which is built up with reproduction cylinders and heads.

"I reckoned that this would be cheaper than sorting out a tatty original. However, some of the reproduction stuff does need a little bit of fettling to make it fit as well as I wanted it to. Luckily, I have access to a rather well-equipped workshop.

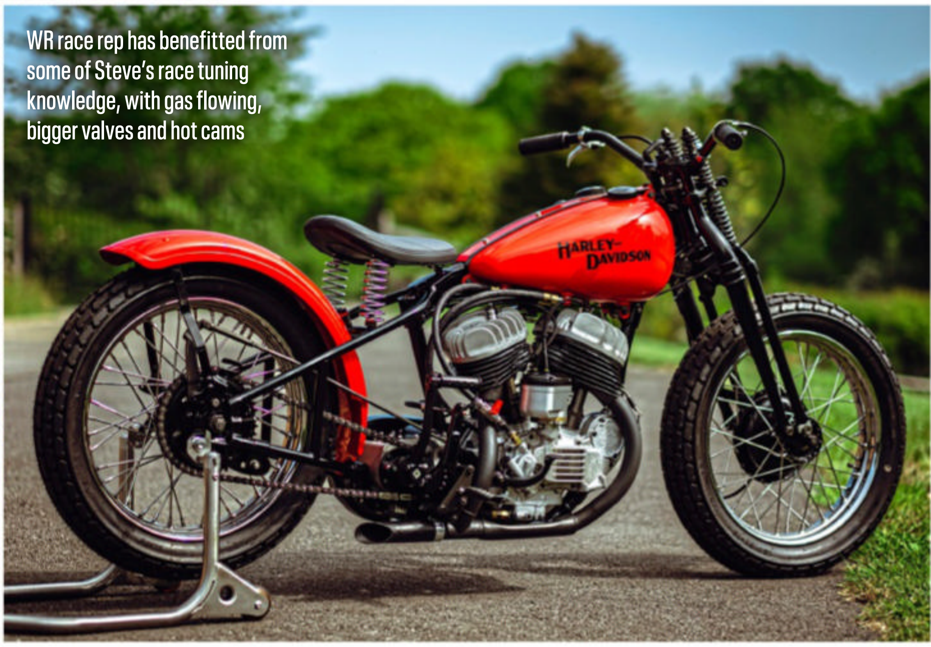
"I was also able to exercise some of my tuning knowledge. I gas-flowed the cylinder tops. The valves are oversize and it runs longer-duration WLDR camshafts with WR-style peek-a-boo covers. There's a 1½in M45 Linkert carburettor on a custom manifold.

"The transmission on this bike is a four-speed repro gearbox. An original would have been three-speed; the four-speed came out in 1947.

"The only things that were not done in the HM premises are the paint and Cerakote. I even built the wheels myself and the handlebars are custom-made. I intend to put it on the dyno to set up the carburation and find out how much power it's making. A WLA claims around 27bhp, however this one feels like quite a bit more – perhaps 30-plus. It pulls from nowhere.

"Now it's finished, I'm not sure I really thought things through. I didn't want to compromise it by making it a road bike; I wanted it to be a racer. But that does mean I'm a bit limited as to where I can use it..." CB

Taking a genuine XR racer on the road like this would be highly inadvisable



WR race rep has benefitted from some of Steve's race tuning knowledge, with gas flowing, bigger valves and hot cams

6 ISSUES FOR

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THE WORKSHOP

Workshops + Knowledge + British bike basics + Project bikes + Technique

Centre of Planet Vincent

Steve Higgins (left) and Ben Read in the Conway Motors workshop in Kent. The company started in 1927 and by 1930 were buying HRD's secondhand bikes that had been taken in part exchange (back then, the factory dealt directly with the public). In 1934 Conway became an official HRD agent and soon specialised in Vincents and HRDs, often displaying 100 new bikes in the 1950s. These days the company holds less stock, but is still one of the world's foremost for Vincent expertise. Here, Steve and Ben are standing with two of their current projects: a Black Shadow and a Series B Rapide. "I've worked here for 12 years," says Ben. "Before that, I was a welder and fabricator." Steve was a precision engineer before joining 20 years ago. "We have bikes coming from France, Belgium, Switzerland, Holland... all over the place."

'With Shadows, you stand back in awe'

When it comes to classic bike marques, Vincent is right up there with the all-time greats. And when it comes to Vincents, **Conway Motors** are world-renowned, having looked after the Stevenage stormers for nearly a century. We checked out their current abode

Words and photography **GREG MOSS**

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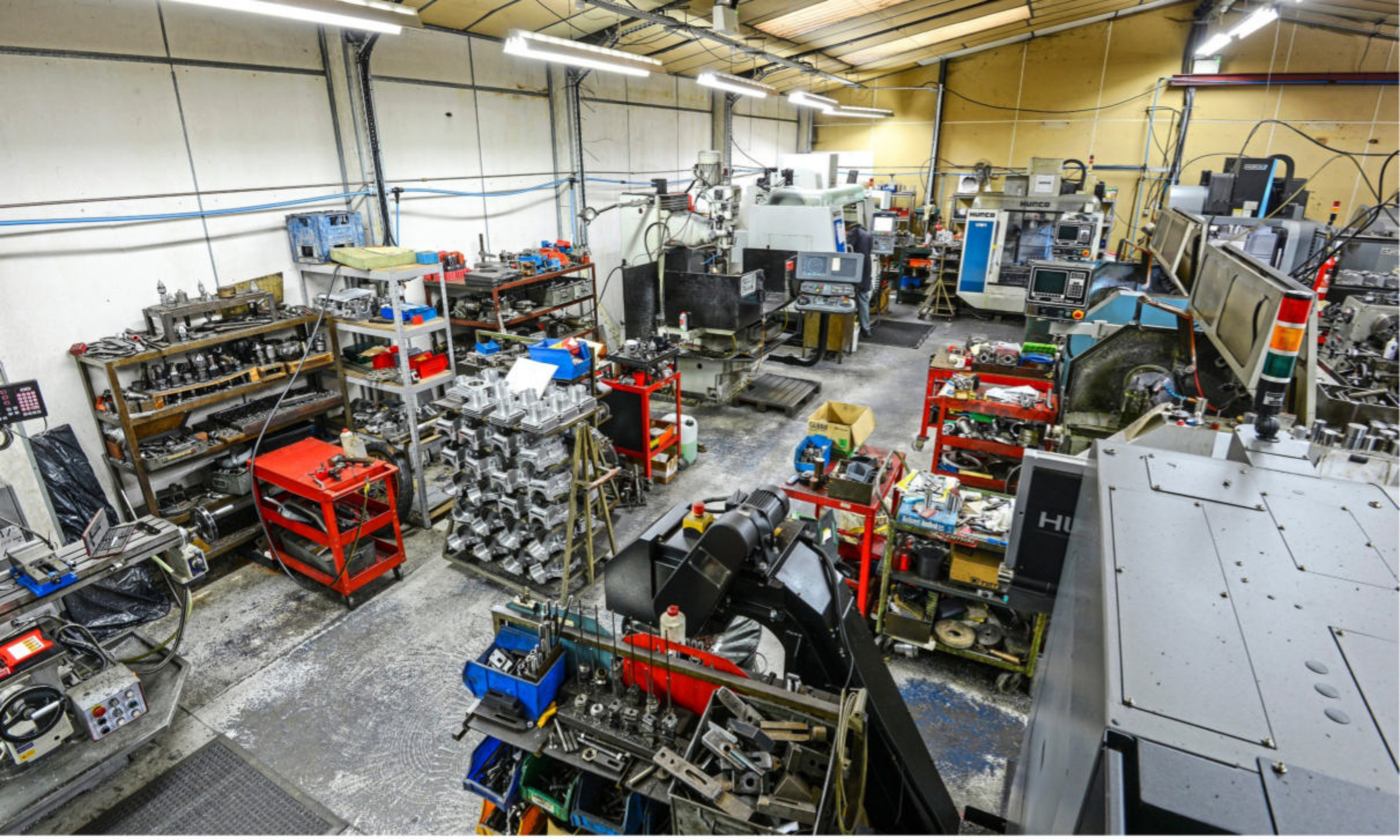
Brit Bike Basics

Ins and outs of gauges and dials

TRIUMPH
BSA
VINCENT
NORTON
Castrol
DJH 106



Conway Motors has been in existence for nearly 100 years and in that period it has gone through various owners and different locations. But one thing has remained constant – Vincents.

These extraordinary machines have always remained at its heart, though now the team work closely with Godden Engineering who specialise in Weslake engines. The workforce of both companies regularly cross over, with new Vincent parts reglularly being machined and milled in the high-tech Godden workshop (above).

“We’ve been involved with grasstrack and speedway for years,” says Conway’s Ben Read while spannering on a Vincent Rapide. “And we manufacture a speedway and a grasstrack engine. Godden and Conway run as sister companies.”

But there’s no doubt where Conway’s heart lies; day-to-day boss is Steve Higgins, a precision engineer who helped his father restore a Vincent Comet at the age of 10 and rebuilt his first Vincent at 17…
conway-motors.co.uk

‘Engineer Steve Higgins helped his father restore a Vincent Comet at the age of 10’

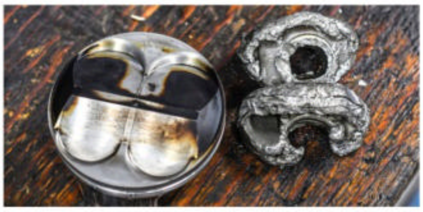
Conway Motors working with Godden Engineering

▲ Conway Motors shares premises with Godden Engineering, a company which has been servicing and producing speedway and grasstrack engines since the ’70s and also makes Vincent parts including cylinder heads. This is Godden’s workshop, complete with multiple CNC machines – the two companies dovetail neatly, with many new parts for Vincents being manufactured here, then going on to be used in restorations at Conway next door.

Fire exit
Keep clear

Every part gets cleaned before use

▲ “That’s George, who’s cleaning some speedway crankcases,” says Ben Read. “I know most people wouldn’t think anything of it, but a cleaning tank like this is a vital part of what we do at Conway. Every single part we deal with goes through the cleaning process – without it, our lives would be a bloody nightmare to be honest. To try and do our jobs without a cleaning tank is unthinkable!”

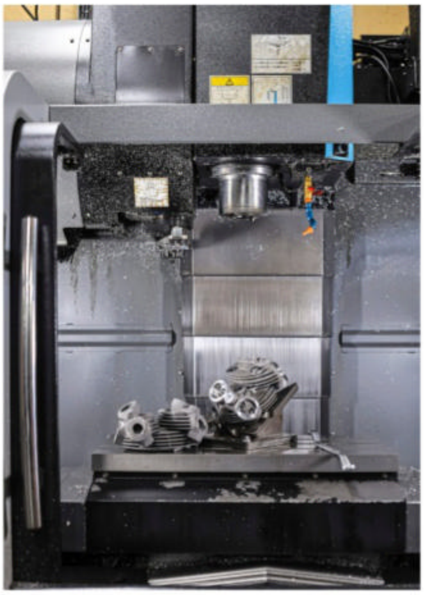


Spot the piston failure

"A new racing piston next to one that has suffered catastrophic failure. This can be caused by stress, heat, mechanical damage and sometimes 14,000rpm being just too much. It's from a 500 GM speedway engine. We've never seen anything like it!"

Weslake in for attention

"This is a Weslake speedway engine from the late '70s. It's in the Godden workshop waiting to be stripped, serviced and rebuilt before its next use."



Seized Shadow rebuilt

"This stunning post-war Black Shadow is one of the 1774 made," say Steve. Ben adds: "That's been a complete engine rebuild. The rubber oil-feed pipe came away from the metal pipe, took all the oil out of the oil tank and seized the motor."

How to make cylinder heads

Ben: "These are Vincent cylinder heads. The head on the left has come from the foundry as a casting, while the one on the right has been fully machined ready to have guides and valve seats fitted. We have several CNC milling machines that can do that. I believe we're the only ones that make them; we ship a lot to America and Australia. You don't sell one for a month, then all of a sudden you sell five on the bounce."

My favourite bikes

Conway's boss Steve Higgins picks his top two-wheelers

Tecnomoto 50

We've had one of these in our family since before I could ride – it was passed on to us from our cousins and my brother and I both learnt to ride on it. It's called a Paciughino and is powered by a Motori Minarelli 50cc single. I still have it, so it's been in the family for 40-plus years. I'll never sell it.

Vincent Comet

My dad bought one in about 1962. From the late '60s until 1982, it lived in the shed. When that finally fell down, we dragged it out and restored it, visiting Conways when it was in Tankerton, Whitstable to buy bits. I was about 10 years old when we started the restoration. I still own the bike now.

BSA Gold Star scrambler

This is my dad's 1956 Gold Star scrambler; it's very close to my heart. Dad used it for scrambling, grasstrack and hillclimbs until it broke a crank pin in 1965. He took it apart, but decided to buy a grasstrack bike rather than put it back together. It stayed in bits until the mid '80s when we rebuilt it.

Heads up for machining

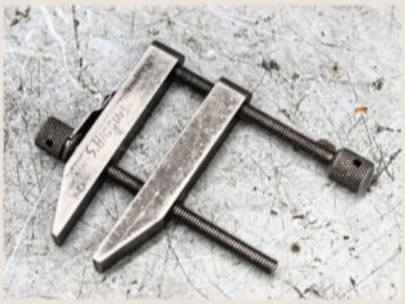
▲ "These are unmachined cylinder heads awaiting to be milled to precision in the Godden workshop," says Steve. "They can be for any Vincent," adds Ben. "At that stage, you can have bigger porting on the inlets or you can twin-plug them – you can fit them to a Comet, Rapide or a Shadow."

Rare beast: Series A motor

◀ Steve: "This is the majestic Series A engine, of which only 78 were produced." Ben: "At one point, the bikes were worth close to £300,000. You would still expect one to reach £200,000-£225,000 now."

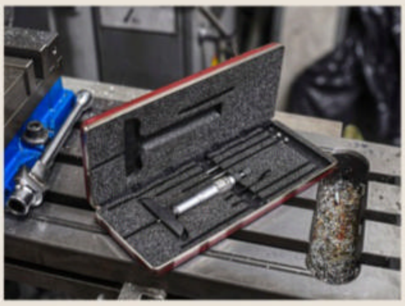
Useful things

Just some of the essential items in Conway's workshop



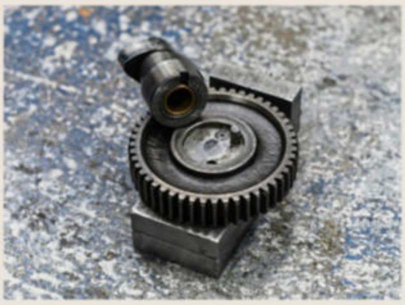
Toolmaker's clamp

Cost: £20-£60 **Where:** Tool suppliers
This toolmakers clamp [often used for holding work while tapping and drilling, with tapered jaws permitting clamping under shoulders] is still used daily, 35 years after Steve made it during his toolmaking apprenticeship. You can buy similar versions from tool suppliers.



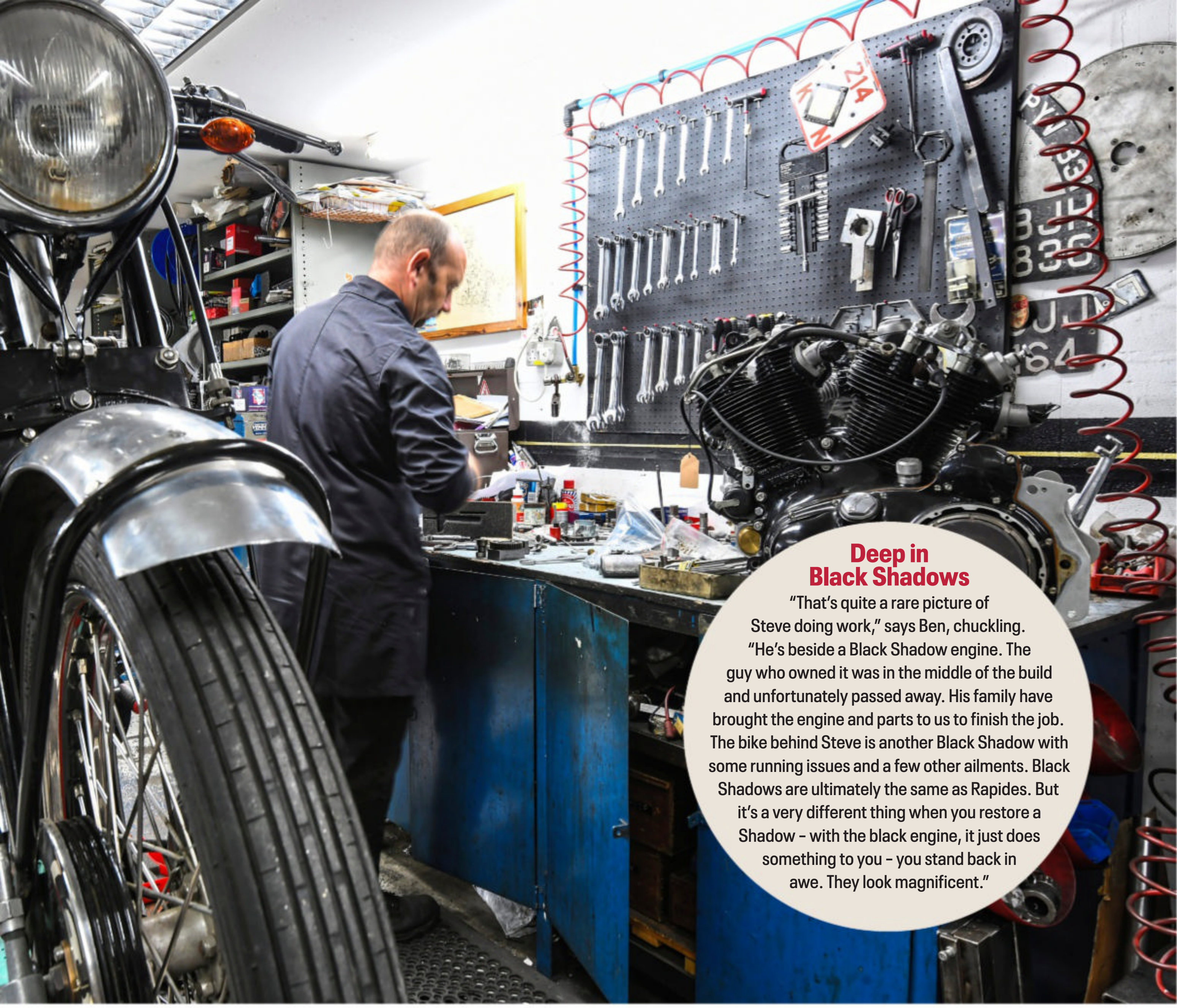
Depth micrometer

Cost: £50-£300 **Where:** Cromwell Tools
This is used to find distances between parallel surfaces and "is a very necessary tool in a busy workshop," according to Steve. It was bought for him at the end of his five-year apprenticeship. Similar ones cost around £300, with simpler and some digital versions costing as little as £50.



Cam timer

Cost: Free **Where:** Home-made
"This simple tool does an important job," says Steve. "It's for timing the cam to the cam wheel." It's needed because the Vincent camshaft is pressed into the gear wheel without a locating key – the tool locates both the wheel and the shaft, so the cam lobes match the timing marks.



Deep in Black Shadows

"That's quite a rare picture of Steve doing work," says Ben, chuckling. "He's beside a Black Shadow engine. The guy who owned it was in the middle of the build and unfortunately passed away. His family have brought the engine and parts to us to finish the job. The bike behind Steve is another Black Shadow with some running issues and a few other ailments. Black Shadows are ultimately the same as Rapides. But it's a very different thing when you restore a Shadow – with the black engine, it just does something to you – you stand back in awe. They look magnificent."

In reverence of a previous owner

▲ "This is a picture of the late Chas Guy," says Steve. "Born Brian Douglas Guy, he previously owned Conway Motors and raced his own Vincent machinery but was tragically killed during the Goodwood Festival of Speed hillclimb practice." Ben: "It's fitting to have a picture of him in the workshop. His wife is still really involved with the Vincent world and pops in every now and again."

A Comet that shouldn't shine too bright

▼ "That's a Series A Comet that's been in the owner's family for 50-odd years – and they've only ever known it in this state. We need to put it back together and restore it to as original condition as possible – they don't want the paintwork or chrome re-done – they want it to look how it is, but running. It's one of the rarest things in the Vincent world."

Next month

MV specialists Meccanica Verghera

Damping wisdom
What you need to know

Springs are only the start of what's required for suspension movement. Get to know the unseen internals that keep the movement of your bike's forks and swingarm in check

Photography: **BAUER**

Alan Seeley

'Suspension damping can appear complicated. It's not really – and a working understanding can help you make your bike feel how you want it to.'

You bike's forks and shock(s) have springs that compress and extend as the wheels move. Without damping, every time you hit a bump or came on and off the throttle or brakes, these springs would bounce like Zebedee at a 1980s rave. They would continue to oscillate unchecked until friction and gravity restored them to a state of equilibrium. Although by the time that happened, you would no doubt have gone over another imperfection in the road or had occasion to brake or accelerate. The riding experience would be more bucking bronco than anything else.

As soon as a spring compresses, it immediately wants to release its energy. The weight of the bike wants to compress it again. After a few minutes of trying to ride through this relentless nonsense, walking would seem preferable.

The need to control and tame the movement of springs is as old as non-rigid suspension itself. Friction dampers were deployed long before hydraulic systems were even considered (and some recent small-capacity scooters still use these simple dampers). However, the limitation of friction damping is that it offers most resistance ahead of the point where the suspension starts to move, and if the suspension is compressing or extending quickly, its damping effect lessens.

Oil damping is the answer – it's the key to efficient power transfer, braking, steering and comfort.

The basics

Let's consider a simple right-way-up front fork. The tube (stanchion) contains a valve or drilling and there is oil in the slider. As the wheel deflects off a bump, the oil has to pass through the valve or drilling into the stanchion. This slows the compression of the suspension as the wheel rises, and has a similar effect on the extension (rebound) of the fork. Typically, less damping is required on compression to prevent jarring and maintain rider comfort, while more is required on extension for smooth handling.

At the rear, the shock absorber(s) uses a drilled piston travelling through oil to achieve the desired damping. On anything other than very basic shocks, gas is used to prevent the oil being churned up leading to cavitation and loss of damping.

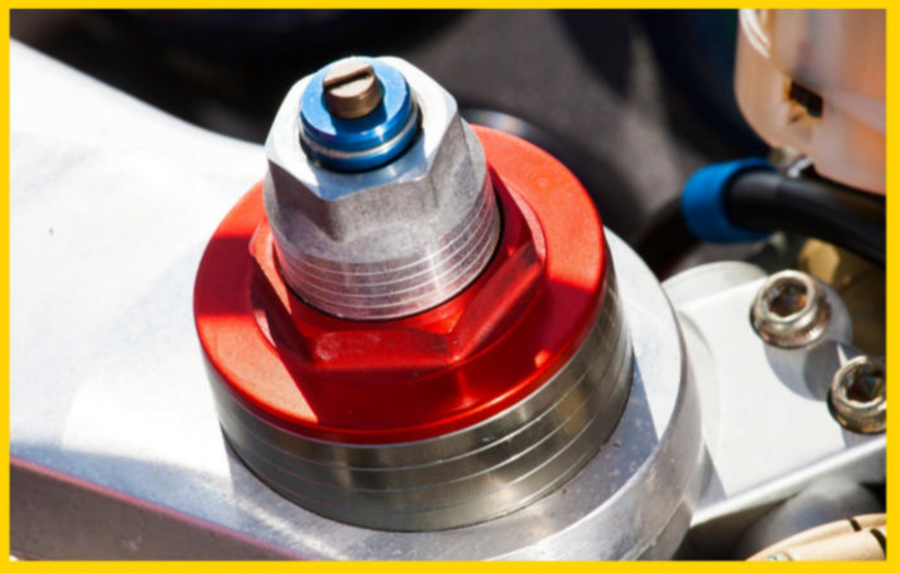
The conflicting demands of compression and rebound damping exposed the limitations of older suspension systems. My 1972 Norton Commando, depending on the grade and amount of oil in the forks – as well as the rating of the springs – might almost bottom out under braking and top out with a mighty 'clang' as the suspension extends. And that from forks that are a development of the venerated 'Roadholder'. They're good, but not that good. No way to adjust them either, other than by messing with suspension oil grades and perhaps changing springs or adding preload 'slugs' to the springs to change the moment of movement. At the rear, the sole adjustment is preload, changing the 'moment' at which the shocks start to move. There is no way to change the damping characteristics themselves.

By contrast, my 2005 Honda CBR1000RR Fireblade displays no such histrionics at the front and there is far more control available at the rear; in the case of the Blade, a monoshock, of course.

A lot happened in the evolution of suspension across the 30-odd years that separate these two seminal machines.

Smoothing the way

As well as the differing demands of basic compression and rebound damping, in an ideal world the suspension should also be able to cope with the varying speeds of compression and rebound it meets



The screwdriver adjuster is used to change fork rebound damping settings; compression damping is usually adjusted at the bottom. The silver 'nut' is for adjusting the spring preload (with rings showing setting)

Suspension damping controls the rate at which your springs compress/extend and stops them bouncing around wildly. This is a rear shock damping adjuster on a 1982 Ducati 900SD Darmah

MARZOCCHI
3

under different riding conditions and circumstances. For example, big bumps move suspension further and faster with a commensurate need for smooth return. When you hear talk of high and low-speed compression damping, this is not to do with the speed at which the bike is travelling, but rather how quickly the suspension is compressing and extending due to the severity of bumps, braking and so on. Holes and valves of different sizes are specified to try and deal with this.

Where early hydraulic forks tried to achieve this through various drillings in the damper rod augmented by a check valve, later designs used cartridges for more sophisticated damping.

The check valve in a damper-rod fork allows the oil to flow easily on compression, but closes on extension to slow the rate of rebound.

A cartridge damper contains a piston drilled with holes actuated by a rod connected to the fork top. The compression damping valves reside at the bottom of the cartridge and those for rebound are on the piston itself. As the fork compresses, the one-way rebound valves shut, forcing the oil through the compression valves. On extension, the rebound valves open to allow the oil back through at the desired rate.

The valves have oilways sized to deal with low and high-speed damping demands. On basic suspension the low-speed oilways are fixed; on more sophisticated designs they might be externally adjustable. The low-speed oilways deal with mild ripples in the road. As things intensify, medium and high-speed damping is provided by ‘shim stacks’ – a number of shims of varying diameter and thickness that deflect as the oil passes through the holes in the piston. Thin shims of large diameter move easily for low-speed deflections to allow oil through, while thicker smaller-diameter shims only deflect for bigger bumps. The innards of a modern-ish rear shock are typically similar to the workings of a cartridge fork.

‘Typically, less damping is needed on compression than rebound’

Motorcycle/suspension manufacturers calculate the best average values for the shims, based on anticipated riding styles and environments.

On other than very basic suspension, damping adjusters are fitted to allow the flow of oil through the shims to be varied, often separated into compression (squashing the suspension) and rebound (extending again) adjusters.

At the next level, usually on race bikes or sophisticated forks and shocks, adjustment is offered for low and high-speed damping, with separate controls over how the unit reacts when compressing/extending slowly and quickly.

Making the most of it

Plainly manufacturers compromise on the specification of suspension componentry. Cartridge emulators are available for many damper-rod forks. As far as cartridges go, a suspension specialist can offer shim stacks best suited to you and the riding you do. They can do the same for the back end or you can look at an aftermarket shock to improve on a worn or basic OE unit.

Even without modification, maintaining and servicing suspension pays dividends. Correctly tailored and set-up suspension isn’t just about huge performance dividends allowing you to make the most of the power you have; you also get more efficient braking and effective handling, plus the potential for improved ride quality. Look to improve your suspension before even considering any tuning upgrades. CB

MAIDSTONE ACES
M.C.C.
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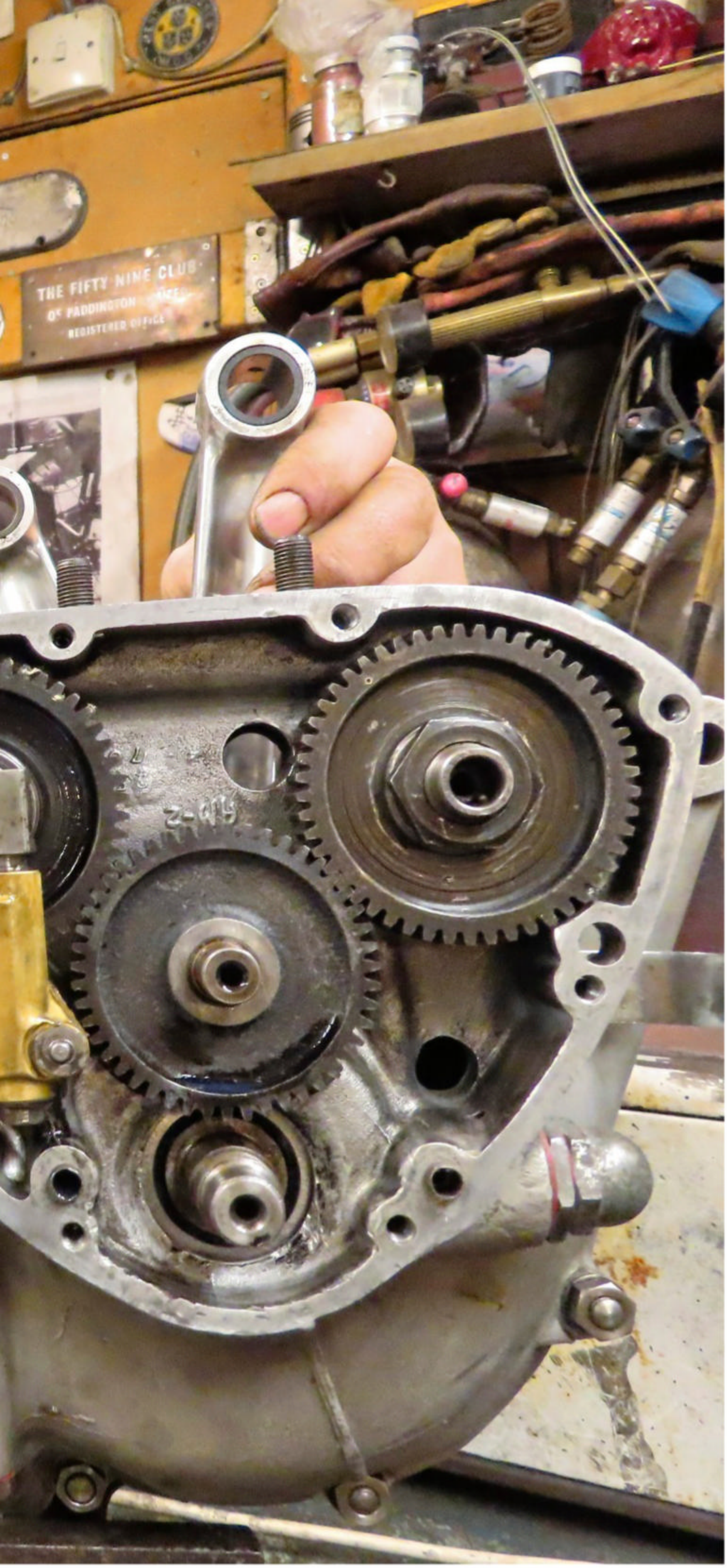
This 650 twin has a murky history of damage and repair, so Rick's being extra-vigilant when rebuilding the all-important bottom end

'It's giving me the jitters'

Our Triumph TR6C engine is causing Rick a few sleepless nights, so he's taking extra precautions to ensure the blow-ups of its history are properly exorcised



Rick Parkington

1970 Triumph TR6C

'More haste, less speed – it's definitely true when rebuilding an engine. Taking it apart again to correct a mistake or to sort something you've overlooked is never fun…'

The crankcases for our 1970 Triumph 650 twin came back from welding right on time, with just a few machining jobs for me to do. Excellent. But I admit that I'm a bit jittery about this rebuild.

When owner Tony Cull got the bike, its engine was in boxes and I'm starting to realise what a tricky dimension that adds – and not only because there's a possibility parts may be missing. Dismantling an engine is like being first on a crime scene – clues are everywhere. But when it's delivered in bits, evidence of what went wrong becomes harder to trace.

This motor has a troubled history, and this time had clearly suffered a severe piston seizure, apparently not long after a rebuild. So why did the previous owner strip the entire engine just for a top-end problem? Did he know something I don't? I've been around Triumph engines long enough to be confident I can put them together successfully – but I'm also aware that you never stop learning and you've never seen it all…

For that reason, I'm being extra vigilant, so when friend of *CB* and Vincent-nut Arthur Farrow dropped me a line saying unexplained seizures can be due to a slightly bent conrod, I decided to check it out.

Arthur's quite right, however I thought it unlikely in this case – Triumph's short, stocky Hiduminium rods are less prone to bend than older steel types. The seizure was also on the thrust face of the piston rather than toward the sides, which is more typical of a bent rod.

But it was definitely worth checking… and I thought I'd better check the crank was straight while I was at it. Both are fine, but I'm glad I ruled them out (thanks for the nudge, Arthur).

With all this in mind, you can imagine my relief when I assembled the crankcase and the crank turned freely and smoothly. As I said before, to my mind, the bottom end of the engine is the most important part – the foundation on which all the rest of it depends. It's also the bit you really don't want to have to come back to, so it's worth taking time over.

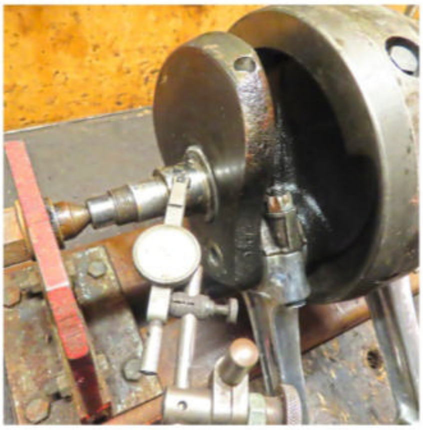
From now on, it will be plain sailing getting the motor thrumming away again. Or at least it should be…

1 Trimmed to length

After trial fitting, I removed the conrods to shorten the too-long big-end bolts – they're good steel and maybe for another model. The nuts were genuine, so I reused them with a small drop of Loctite.

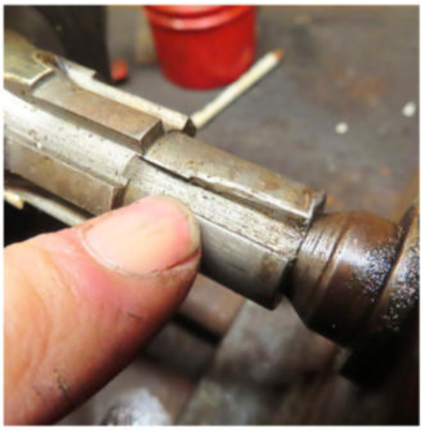
2 Straight as a die

I checked rod truth on a surface plate, although you could do it placing them both on one gudgeon pin, back to back, all ways round. I've never seen a bent example and these turned out to be fine.



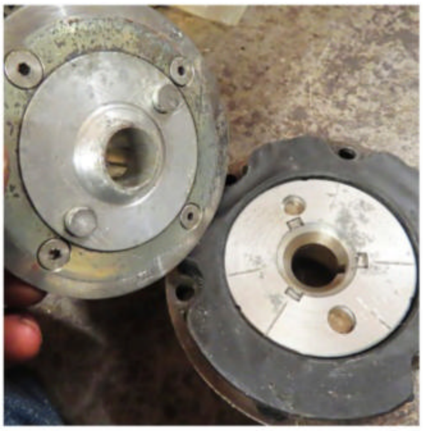
3 Better safe than sorry

Given this engine's chequered history, I also checked that the crank was running true. Mounted on centres, you look for deflection as close to the middle as possible. Again, no problem.



4 They all do that, sir

Looks like the alternator rotor's worked loose in the past, damaging the crank keyway. It's a weak point and a common problem on these twins, usually fixed by welding and re-machining the slot…

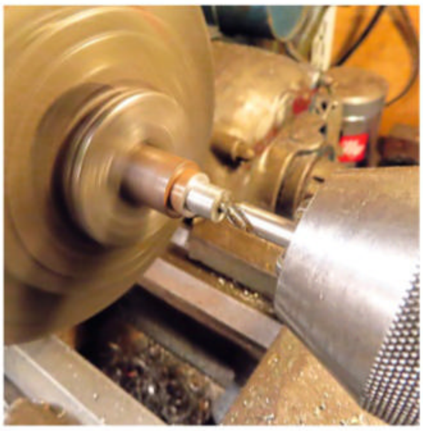


5 Preventative measures

…but this one has already been converted to a peg-type rotor drive. A mod devised by former *CB* contributor Royce Creasey, it's a great solution, driving the heavy rotor much more positively.

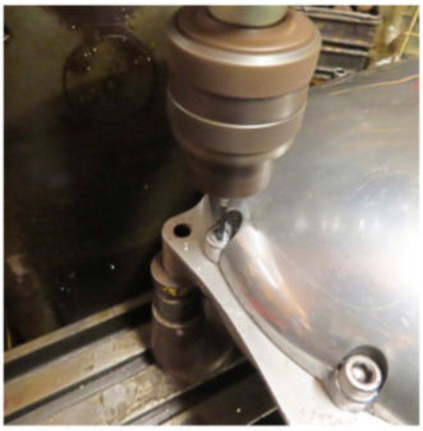
6 Drill… but where?

With the crankcases back from welding, I need to locate, drill and tap a hole. The outer case gives me the position, but it's a mistake to drill size for size through the screw hole – it's too big to centre.



7 Quick, to the lathe!

What you need is a pilot hole, so on the lathe I turn up a 'button' with an outside diameter that's a snug fit for the hole in the outer cover – and which has an accurately-centred ⅛in hole up the middle.

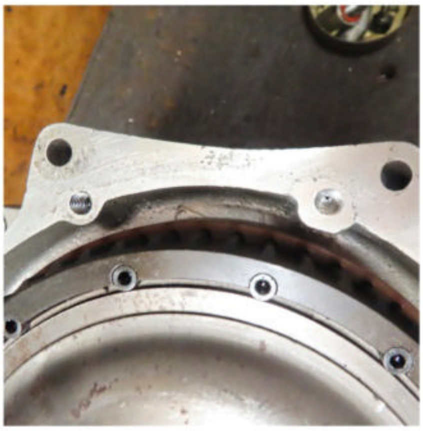


8 In the right place

Cover bolted on, the button in the hole provides a guide that locates a ⅛in pilot drill accurately central to the cover hole. A hand or pillar drill will do, but I set it all up on the milling machine.

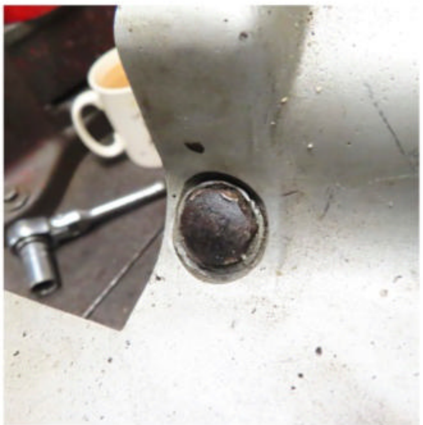
9 Confidently aligned

Having the case clamped down on the mill allows me to lock the table, so after drilling the pilot I can follow up with the tapping-size drill and the tap itself, without the case moving off centre.



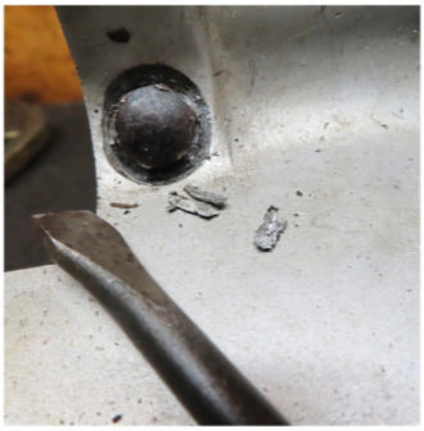
10 Finishing flourish

Next job was to loosely fit the gearbox mainshaft to take the clutch and drive belt, so I could check how much weld to grind off for clearance. Not much, as it happened – I used a carbide burr in a Dremel.



11 Can't get purchase

The ignition timing plug refused to come out. The hex was pretty rounded, partly because a soft aluminium washer has crushed up the sides, preventing me from getting a socket on to full depth.

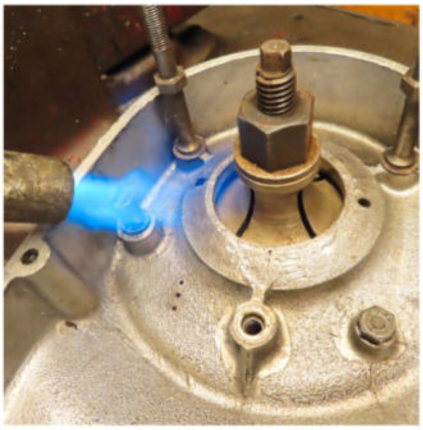


12 Gently does it

The solution here was to cut off the overhanging bits of soft aluminium with a sharp chisel. By working round each flat of the bolt head, this exposed the undamaged bit of hexagon.

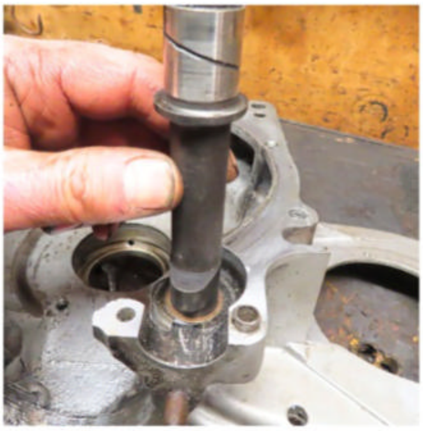
13 Having an impact

And yet it still resisted being removed. It's been there a while, I suspect. Worth bearing in mind that the half-inch drive of an impact driver will also take sockets – with a bit of heat added, it came undone.



14 Let the heat do the work

Two holes have been drilled to pin-punch out the left main bearing outer, but I used a factory puller. It's heavy, so usually you only need to heat the case up and the bearing simply drops out.



15 Deceptive slop

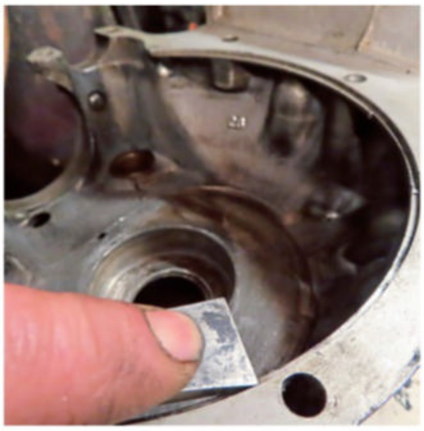
The camshafts are quite new, although the cam bushes are not. Well lubricated, these don't usually wear too badly – but fit the cam into one side at a time like this and they will feel very sloppy.

16 Rattles not welcome

The best wayto do it is to support both ends with the cases bolted together. This will give a more realistic idea of wear. Expect perceptible up and down movement, but not a 'rattling fit'. These are OK.

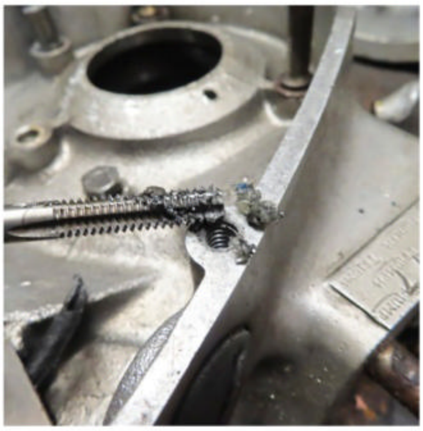
17 Just a light smear

New right-hand bearing is about a thou loose on the crank, so I used Bearing Fit retaining compound here. Spread thinly in the bearing, not onto the shaft, the excess pushes out rather than lodging behind the bearing.



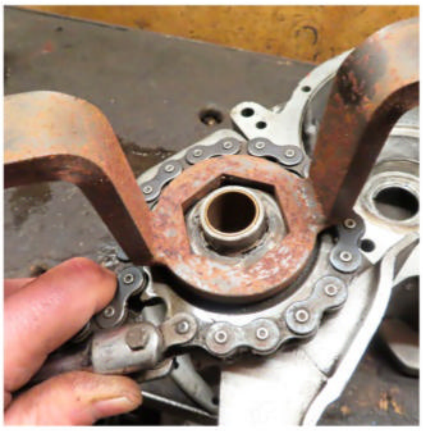
18 Remove the old gunk

Before heating the case and fitting the crank, carefully check that the gasket face is clean and smooth – especially the 'register' rebate shown here. It's a locating fit that's often gummed up with old sealant.



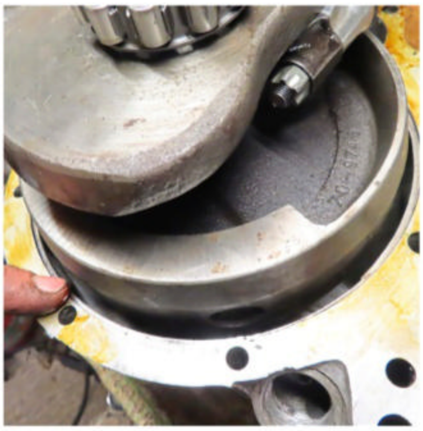
19 Cleanliness is key

Also run a finishing tap through all threads in the cases. It's amazing how much old sealant and gunge can be mined from these places – it's something that can cause hydraulic lock that strips or cracks the hole.



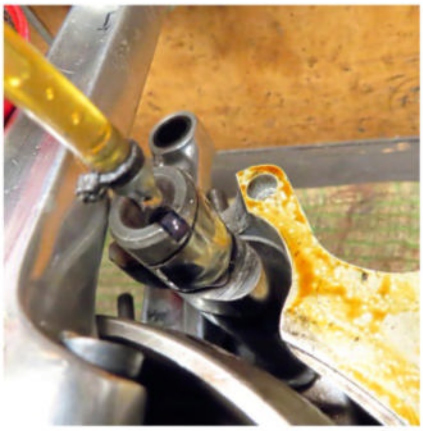
20 Have you gone up a tooth?

This is the time I'd recommend fitting the gearbox sprocket, too. It can be fitted after – this spanner is designed for that – but if you're using a bigger than standard sprocket, it may not fit through the hole.



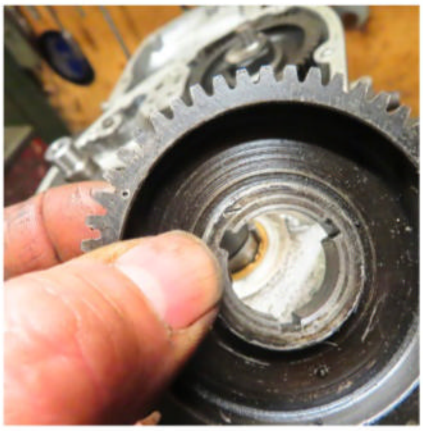
21 Just like Meriden did

People say vertically-split cases cause leaks, but I disagree. A gasket-face this wide in good condition won't leak. I use Wellseal jointing compound here – it's what the factory used and can be applied thinly.



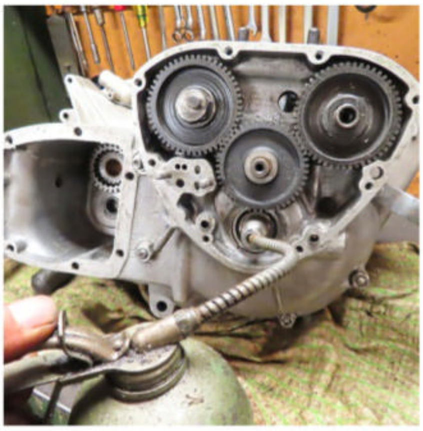
22 Check as you work

Oil and fit the cams before joining cases; this late engine doesn't have the earlier easily-forgotten breather disc and spring. Turn the cams as the cases go together to ensure they're still free.



23 It's the magic number

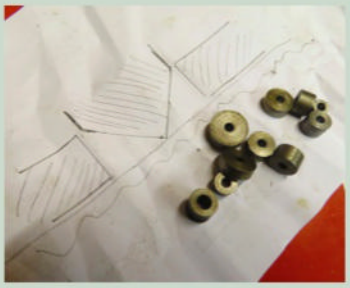
Three-keyway camwheels offer finer adjustment for special timing. With standard cams, use the slot closest to the dot mark. Again, check that the cam doesn't tighten while pressing on the wheel.



24 Lubed up and ready

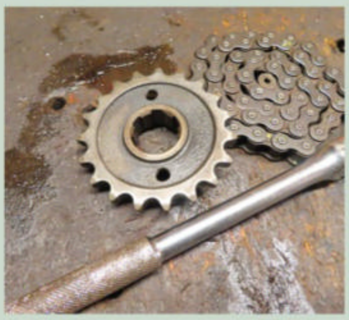
Now we're on to the final act in this bottom-end rebuild. It's turning the motor to bottom dead centre before pumping clean oil into the crank from an oil can – that will leave it primed, ready for starting.

Three things...



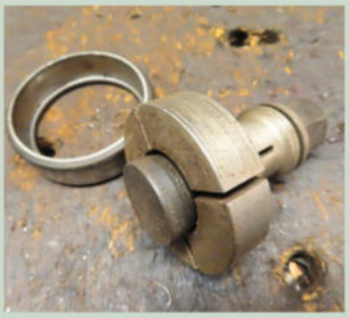
Drilling buttons

Home-made piloting buttons make it easy to position holes easily. This diagram shows how the point on a large drill leaves inadequate support at the sides to keep the point central.



Chain wrench

A chain wrench makes holding a sprocket while tightening or undoing an easy task. They're usually a small-pitch chain – unlike this one, which I picked up somewhere. It's probably home-made.



Bearing puller

The left-side main bearing has no lip to grab, but this puller has a conical bolt that expands it inside, gripping the bearing by friction. Heat the case and it'll drop out. Around £60 new.

Next Month

With the last parts ordered, Rick will be completing the motor and firing it back up. Fingers crossed...

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

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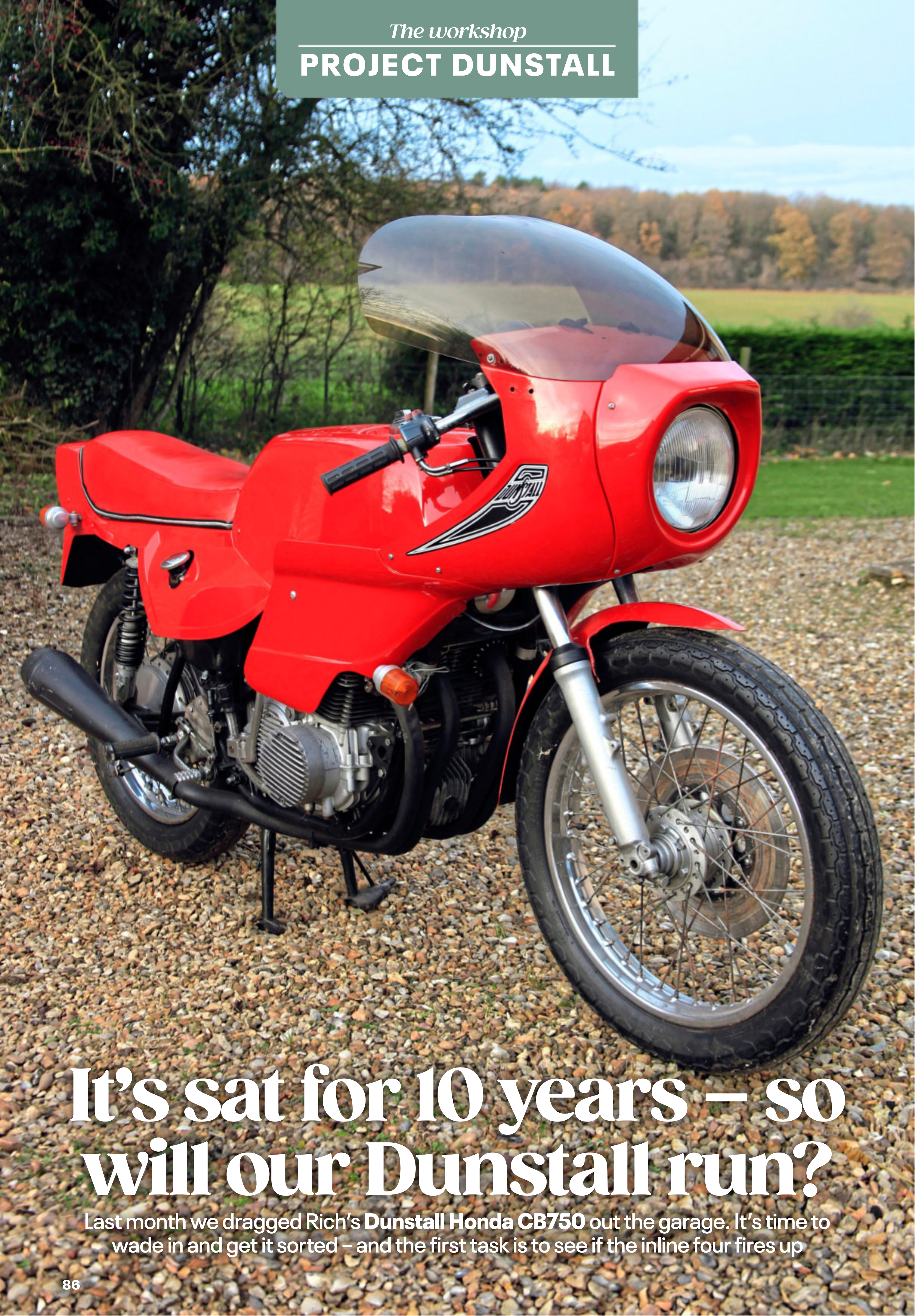


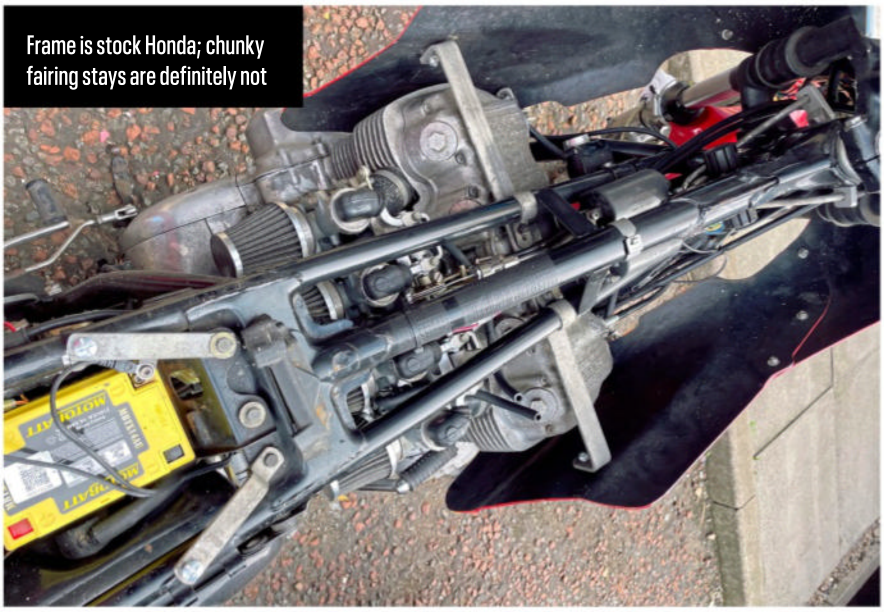
It's sat for 10 years – so will our Dunstall run?

Last month we dragged Rich's **Dunstall Honda CB750** out the garage. It's time to wade in and get it sorted – and the first task is to see if the inline four fires up

Alan Seeley

Dunstall Honda CB750

Alan's been tinkering on British, Japanese and Italian bikes for decades. Just the man to bring Rich's 750 back to life.



Frame is stock Honda; chunky fairing stays are definitely not

ALAN SEELEY

You don't see one of these every day. And neither did you see one of these every day back in the day. It's the 1975 Dunstall Honda CB750 project we introduced last month, owned by Richard Newland (one of our big bosses at *CB*).

It hails from the latter part of Paul Dunstall's stellar career as a racer, tuner and aftermarket manufacturer. You may see the odd earlier (often British) bike bearing his unique stamp, but this CB750 is a far rarer beast.

Whether this is a fully Dunstall-ised CB, tuned and converted in the great man's workshops, is a moot point. Richard's hunch is that it isn't. He was told that the bike has a big-bore kit fitted. There could be bigger slugs and even a hot cam lurking in that engine, but only a partial stripdown would tell for sure.

What we can say, however, is that the exterior is largely present and correct. There's a full Dunstall Devastator bodykit, a Dunstall Decibel 4-2-2 exhaust system and Dunstall rearsets. The clip-ons are new-old-stock Dunstall, replacing some moody copies that came with the bike. The aftermarket finned engine covers are certainly in period, although who made them is unknown.

The bike came to the UK from Germany, six years before Rich bought it in 2008. The 34,000 kilometres on the clock and the overall patina suggest it's original, apart from a red respray over the original yellow.

An illustration of its rarity is that Rich confesses to having searched the internet for Dunstall Honda parts pretty much every day since he bought the bike 17 years ago. Not much turns up for them, but as well as the original Dunstall clip-ons in Canada, he found a new-old-stock ignition in Taiwan and an advance/retard mechanism and points plate from the US.

> **'The Keihin carb's float bowl shows an encouraging lack of cack'**

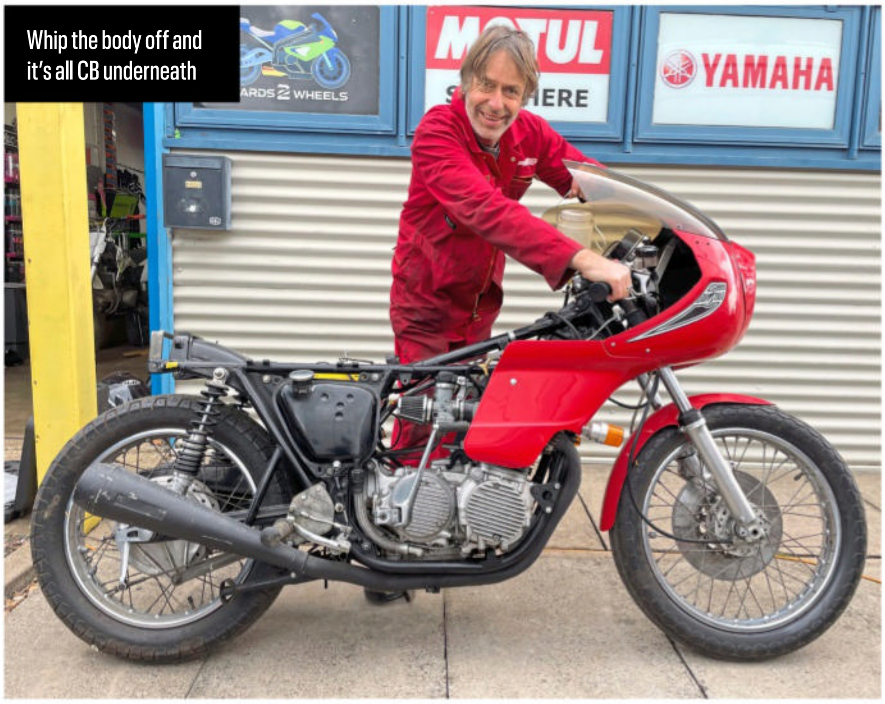
During this flurry of enthusiasm for the '70s delight, Rich also bought a second brake caliper from a bloke in Scotland with a view to performing a twin-disc conversion, along with a headlight that dips the right way from DK Spares. He also bought and fitted a Dynojet Dyna S electronic ignition.

And, once he'd fitted the Dyna S, Rich briefly fired up his Dunstall in 2015. So it hasn't run for a decade, and he hasn't ridden it at all – in fact, it's never been road-registered in the UK. So, rather than restoration, we're going to get it sorted so Rich can at last enjoy his Dunstall – and today we're going to get it running.

Initial assessment is encouraging. Turning the dry-sump engine over on the starter without fuel sees oil returning to the tank. A single bolt holds the seat on, and just four screws secure the tail unit and tank cover which can be removed as one piece. An original CB750 tank sits underneath. A glance in the filler reveals it to be rusty inside, so it's removed and set aside for attention later. Dropping one of the Keihin carbs' quick-release

Peeping in the filler shows the tank has seen better days. It's on the to-do list

Quick-release float bowls on the four Keihin carbs make inspection straightforward


Whip the body off and it's all CB underneath

float bowls shows an encouraging lack of cack, so the decision is taken to hook up an auxiliary fuel tank to see if she'll run after her 10-year hibernation.

Incredibly, the old Honda fires up at the first push of the starter button. There's a fair bit of blue oil smoke in the exhaust, even after a couple of minutes of running – hopefully this is sticky rings rather than something more sinister.

There's also some fuel leaking around carbs one and two, which might be a float needle or a perished fuel pipe. After a second start-up a few minutes later, there's still a dribble of fuel from the carbs but there's noticeably less smoke. We might be OK. A compression test will reveal more as the recommissioning process progresses.

> **'After a few minutes there's less smoke...'**

Chuffed at the CB's eagerness to get back on the road, we draw up a plan. First order of business will be removing the carbs for full inspection and a clean. O-rings, gaskets, float needles and fuel lines will all be replaced – at the very least. It's likely that the carbs have been rejetted to match the K&N-style air filters and Dunstall 4-2-2 exhaust. We'll be looking at the whole set-up very closely.

Obviously, the engine oil will be changed. Dunstall in their wisdom designed the exhaust system so that the oil filter housing can't be removed without dropping (or at least loosening) the headers. It will be interesting to see what the filter element looks like when we eventually get it out.

Once the engine is checked and serviced, we'll go through the bike front to back. There's lots we have already spotted: one of the brake caliper mount threads is stripped; fork seals are leaking and, of course, the oil will be ancient; lock stops have been hammered into submission; and while the yoke is out for repair, the headstock bearings will need lubrication or, more likely, replacement. The headlight will need to be wired up. The indicators aren't working. The fairing mount approximates what Dunstall would have supplied, but to be honest even Heath-Robinson would baulk at it. We can and will do better.

We expect to find more areas needing attention further back on the bike. The swingarm bushes will doubtless require work after inspection and the Koni shocks will want an overhaul. The transmission will certainly benefit from some new clutch plates and perhaps a new chain and sprockets. New tyres are a given.

Everything that moves or should move will be inspected and lubricated. Anything that wears out will be scrutinised. Basically, a very thorough recommissioning.

There's plenty to make and do, but the task is made a little less daunting by the fact that underneath the fancy bodywork, the Dunstall is basically still a 1975 Honda CB750 K2. And one that eagerly fires into life. Barring any nightmares lurking deep in the engine, we'll have Rich and the Dunstall back on the road when the daffodils break through the soil.

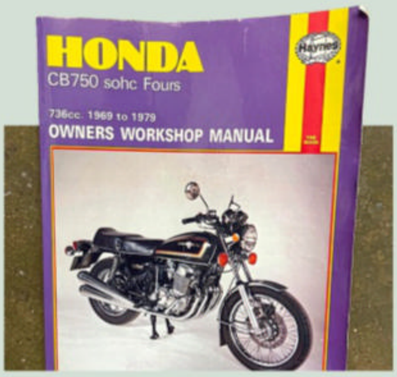
Three things...

Auxiliary tank

Far easier than messing with an actual fuel tank when getting a bike running. Gives easy access to carbs and engine, too.

Multimeter

Is there enough voltage in the battery? Is it getting to where it needs to be be? This thing is essential.



Workshop manual

Never far from hand when working on a bike. Luckily, the Dunstall is pretty much stock under the stop-and-stare bodywork.

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Charging woes sorted

How do you stop a **Yamaha RD200** from devouring batteries? By treating yourself to a posh new tachometer, of course...

Alex Innocent

1978 Yamaha RD200DX

Having squared up his stroker's engine and chassis, relentless tinkerer Alex has found new areas to focus his attention...

I've had some great rides on the RD now and it hasn't broken down for ages. But there's always a charging issue. Despite a new battery that's fully charged before setting off, riding with the headlight on eventually makes the bike lose the spark on one cylinder. It doesn't do it with the headlight off, so must be a voltage issue.

The Yam has a DC starter/dynamo-type charging system using a regulator. My 72-year-old tractor has the same kind of system, with coils and mechanical points which control charging voltages. It's simple and works... to a point. It's not as accurate or consistent as alternator systems, with voltages dropping and rising with revs – which reduces battery life. The system can be adjusted, but a voltmeter and tachometer are required. As I've wanted to fit a tacho for a while, this is the perfect excuse.

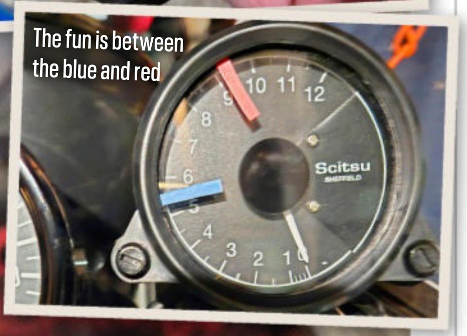
Part of the standard tacho drive within the casing is missing and I don't have an original tacho. But Scitsu in Sheffield manufacture one for classic race bikes with an internal (user-replaceable) lithium battery which lasts all year. There's one wire which loops around the spark plug leads, so the unit can detect spark pulses.

On the road and stopping by choice, not breakdown

It comes with mounting hardware, but with my bike's café racer modifications I need to make it fit somewhere. I have a few front reflector mounts in the garage that you get on a new pushbike and always take off. The diameter of the mount happens to fit the fork tube, so I make a couple of plates out of aluminium – one fitting to the reflector mount, and one to the headlamp bracket. I can then fit the supplied mount with its rubber springs to absorb vibes. The tacho works perfectly (and immediately shows I have the tickover set slightly low).

Now I can adjust the regulator. Under its cover is an adjustment screw. You rev the engine to around 5500rpm and the no-load voltage measured on the red wire out of the regulator should be around 16 volts; mine is low, so I adjust the screw.

Pushbike reflector mount put to use


The fun is between the blue and red

GCSE metalwork put to good use to fit the swanky new tacho

ALEX INNOCENT

'Power comes in strong at 5500'

Now slightly deafened by the custom pipes, I head out for a ride. The battery is at 13.1 volts when I set off, headlight on, electric start used – and still at 13.1 when I get home. Result! Another tacho benefit is learning that the power comes in strong at 5500rpm and signs off around 9000rpm, so I stick suitably-coloured tape on the tacho glass at those points.

Winter tinkering will include removing the hydraulic clutch conversion and going back to a cable. I'll put new pistons in, and may try to design and 3D print an airbox to improve range – it might only be a 200, but it uses *so* much fuel. And if I can find some spare cylinders, I may have a go at porting them with my Dremel...

50 years old, only a bit grumpy

Mark Holmes

1975 Moto Guzzi T3 California

My Guzzi has recently had its 50th birthday. I've owned the bike for 11 years now and racked up nearly 20,000 miles. In between those miles there have been breakdowns, roadside repairs and trips in the Van of Shame. None of which have put me off being in a relationship with this throbbing chunk of charisma – well, not for long, anyway.

The times it has randomly refused to start pale into significance against the life-affirming rides we've shared and all the great people we've ridden with. The last few years have stacked up a bank of great memories: we've done everything from a freezing February haul to Holland, wanderings around Wales and rollocking rallies in the Scottish Highlands and Spain's Picos de Europa. Good times.

Having helped me achieve a long-held ambition to finish the 5000 Curvas endurance run in last year's Piston Rally, the California has now 'gone off' a bit. On start-up this year, its rough running limited 2025's first ride to a splutter round the block. Fresh fuel helped, but it hasn't run sweetly all year. Hoping it would fix itself hasn't worked, either.

"Only one thing for it – a damn good thrashing!" was the recent Basil Fawlty-esque advice from my mate Keith, so I thraped the bike up and down a nearby hill. It still pulls like the Flying Scotsman as it climbs up the range, but grumpiness persists lower down. A visit to Big Nige, my Guzzi guru up in Staffordshire, is in order, so I'll be reporting on getting it fit again this winter. In the meantime, my wife baked a little something to celebrate the Cali's landmark birthday and say thanks for the memories so far.

We all bake cakes for our bikes... don't we?

Dribbly Yamaha finally diagnosed

Mike Armitage

1990 Yamaha TDR250

The oil leak on my TDR250 isn't serious. It's had it for the seven years that I've owned it and is just a weep really. But popping an old paint roller tray underneath in the garage has eventually become tiresome, so it's time to fix it.

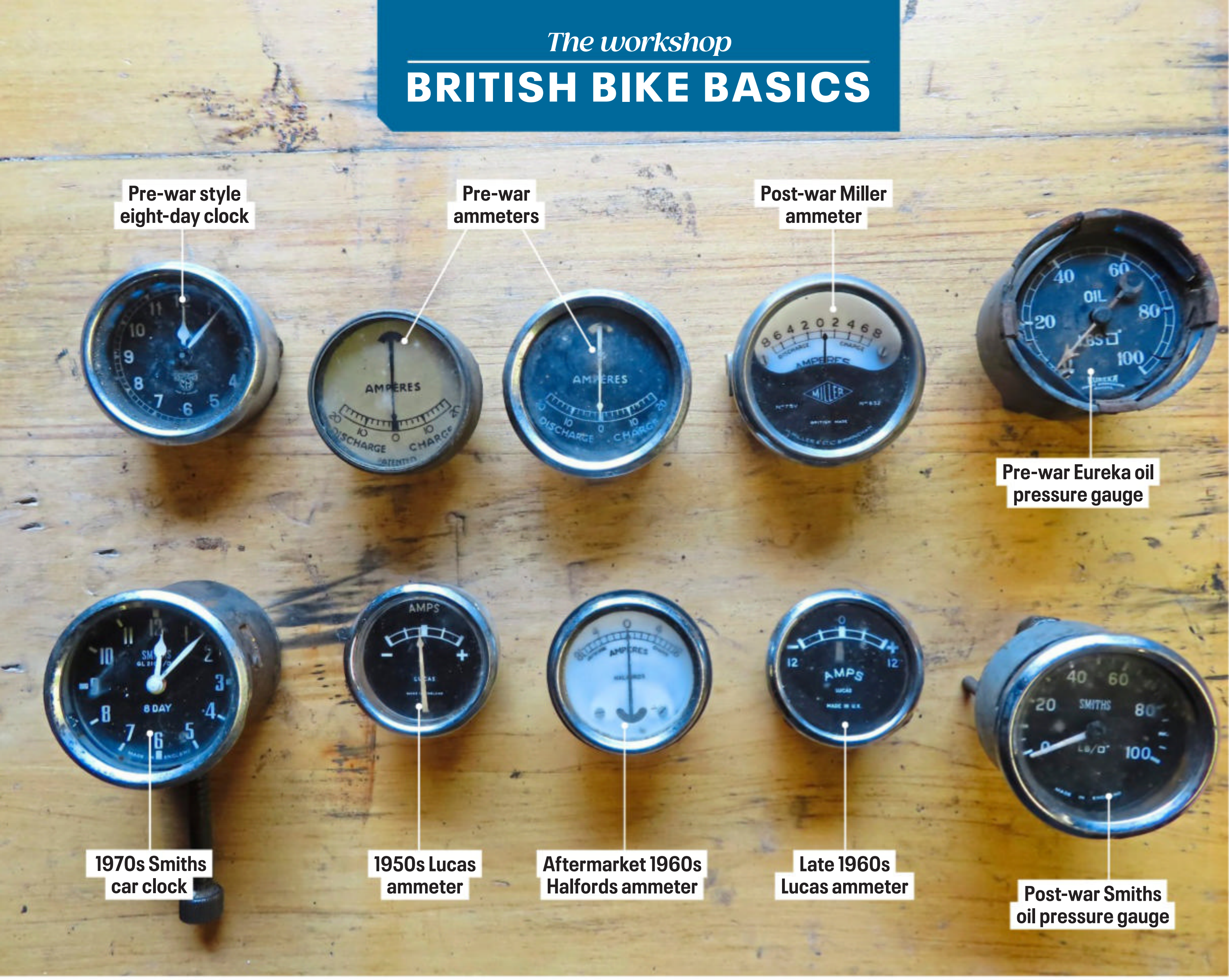
Dribbling gearchange shaft seals are common on Yamaha two-strokes, so this is initially what I suspected. A reader called Ian emailed about a kit that places a second seal outboard of the original, side-stepping shaft wear issues for a quick, effective fix. He's chuffed with the one on his RD400. But I've started to think it's the TDR's gearbox output shaft, as oil is being splattered onto the chain and frame.

After removing an embarrassing amount of oil and filth, the gearchange seal does indeed appear to be behaving – but there's clean oil on the tab washer and nut for the sprocket. So I remove the sprocket, tease out the collar behind... and get a nice little puddle of gearbox oil on the floor where I should have put the roller tray.

With the collar a snug fit, the seal intact, it seems most of the escaping oil is trickling down the splines on the output shaft. Nosing at the pretty exploded view of the gearbox in the Yamaha workshop manual, there's an O-ring between the collar and the outer shaft bearing – or rather there should be. My bike hasn't got one.

Replacing the original main seal means splitting the crankcases. But the manual shows a different seal that can be used and retained by a circlip, to save pulling the cases apart. Fowlers have a genuine Yamaha seal, circlip and the absent O-ring in stock for £24 – I've ordered the lot...

Gearbox oil has been seeping down the splines


Pre-war style eight-day clock
Pre-war ammeters
Post-war Miller ammeter
Pre-war Eureka oil pressure gauge
1970s Smiths car clock
1950s Lucas ammeter
Aftermarket 1960s Halfords ammeter
Late 1960s Lucas ammeter
Post-war Smiths oil pressure gauge

Gauges and dials

There's not much instrumentation on most British bikes, but what there is can take many forms – and making sure your needles move as they should is a key part of ownership

Rick Parkington

"Modern bikes have every conceivable bit of data on their 'dash'... but on a classic Brit, you just get what you need - there's minimal distraction from enjoying the ride."

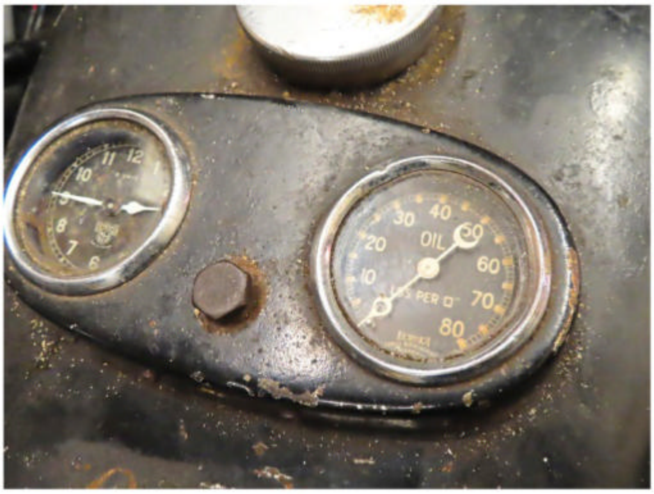
Old British bikes tend not to bristle with instrumentation. Speedometers were only made compulsory in 1937 and anything else seemed on a 'need to know' basis, with the implication that a true enthusiast knew what was going on without need for warnings. Hence the term 'idiot lights'.

But some information was available. Hand gearchange gates were often stamped 'High', 'Middle' and 'Low', which later carried over to gear (or at least 'Neutral') indicator pointers on some gearboxes. The Triumph Tiger Cub even had a dial on the headlamp with a cable-driven needle.

Onboard clocks may seem an unlikely luxury on a pre-war bike, but were very useful when your usual timepiece was buried under layers of bike gear inside a waistcoat pocket. They died out in the late 1940s, probably because by then wristwatches were almost universally worn.

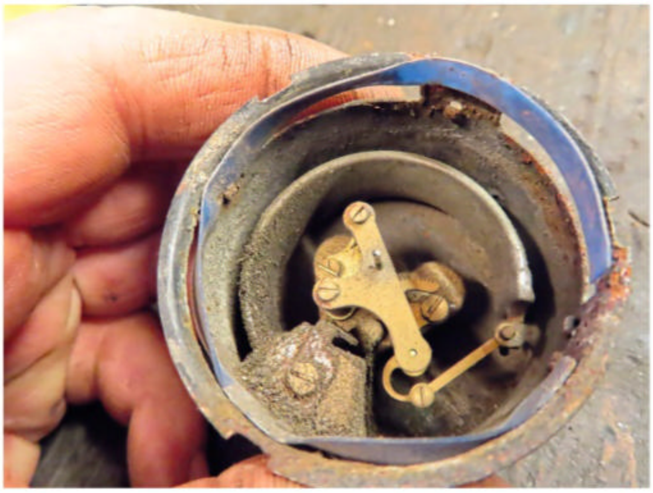
The priority of most riders was knowing the engine was lubricated. Even when oil was drip-fed from a manual pump, it passed through a glass cylinder so you could check or adjust the drip rate. When automatic drip pumps came along, they were so mistrusted that the sight window remained until it was replaced by a pressure-operated button 'telltale' which steadfastly survived – especially on performance engines – until the late 1950s.

The ammeter came along with the dynamo. It did cross over into the alternator era, but wasn't so necessary as it had been with dynamo systems and was dropped by the 1970s. A dynamo is really an electric motor in reverse, and if its output drops too low the battery tries to turn it like a starter motor. To prevent this, the regulator contains a magnetic switch that disconnects the dynamo when the engine stops; if that function fails, the ammeter will show a heavy discharge highlighting the problem. Similarly, if the switch fails to reconnect when the engine starts, there will be a discharge with the lights on – so in both cases the ammeter reveals a problem before you're stranded with a flat battery, making it worth keeping an occasional eye on.



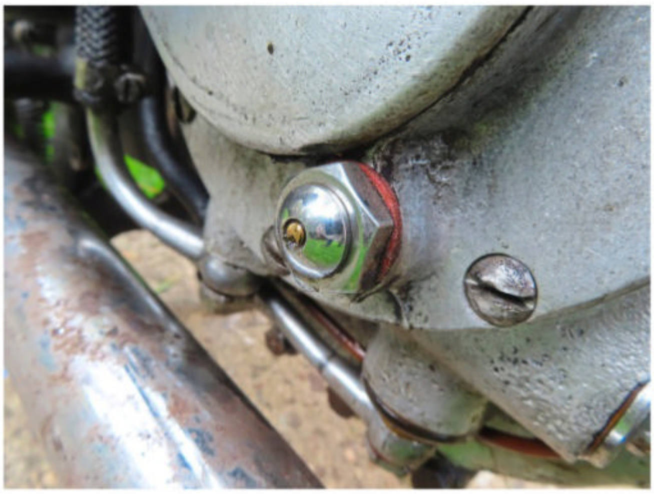
1 It's more of a guide

Hot and cold oil makes pressure vary widely, as can an oil change, so a gauge works better at monitoring abnormal behaviour – like suddenly dropping to zero – than evaluating actual pressure.



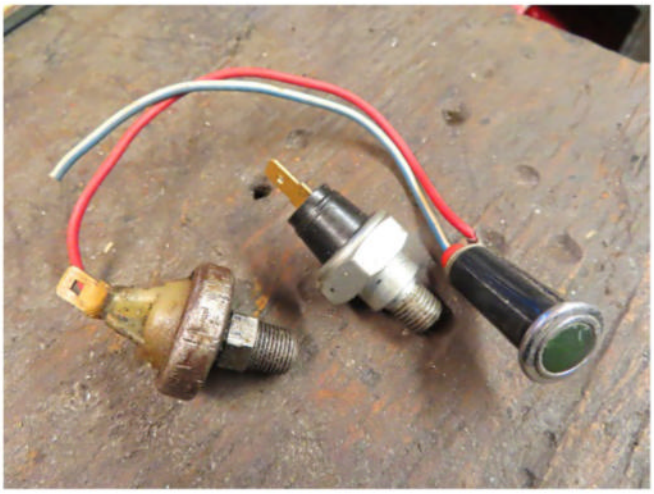
2 A party in your oil gauge

Inside is a flattened copper tube, curved so it unrolls under pressure like a party whistle, moving the needle. Excess pressure – eg from blockage – can distort the tube until it won't return to zero.



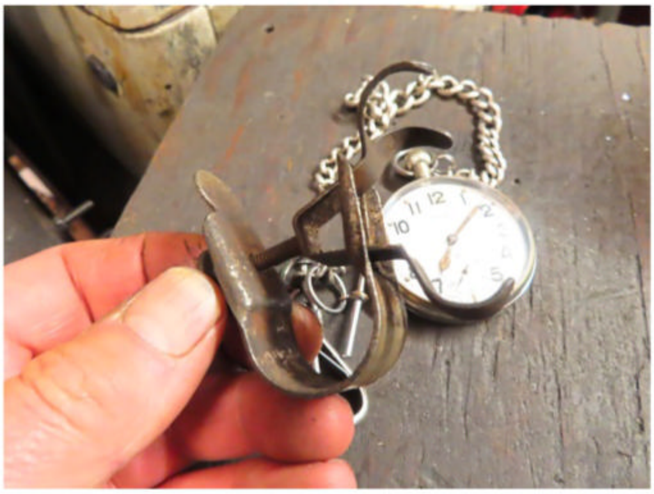
3 Telling tales

Before gauges there was the 'telltale' – a spring-loaded button that stood out or pulsed under pressure from the oil supply. Triumph carried on using them into the 1950s. They're useful but leak-prone.



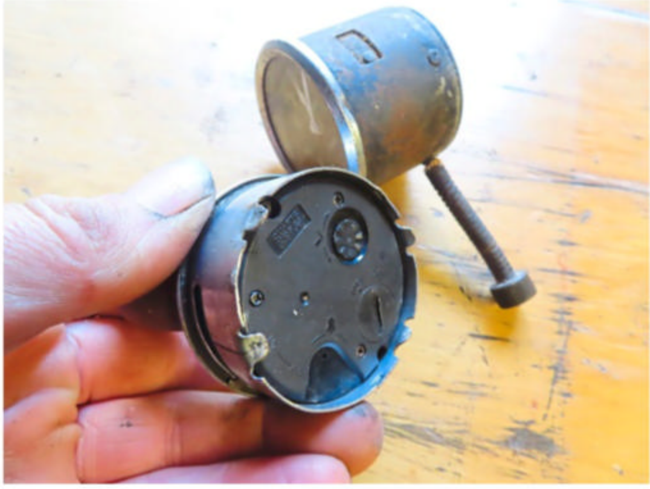
4 Making light of it

The late '60s brought the oil pressure switch. Pressure opens the contacts; so, used as an earth point for a bulb, the light comes on with the ignition but should go out as soon as the engine starts.



5 Vintage Quadlock

Accessories have always been popular. In the early days, you could buy one of these clips to hold your pocket watch on the handlebars – which, if nothing else, probably kept watchmakers in work…



6 Sneaky battery

In the '30s, eight-day car-type clocks were fitted in the tank. They're similar but not identical to actual car fitments. Check the shell depth/winder location – if it's broken, you can fit a battery movement inside.

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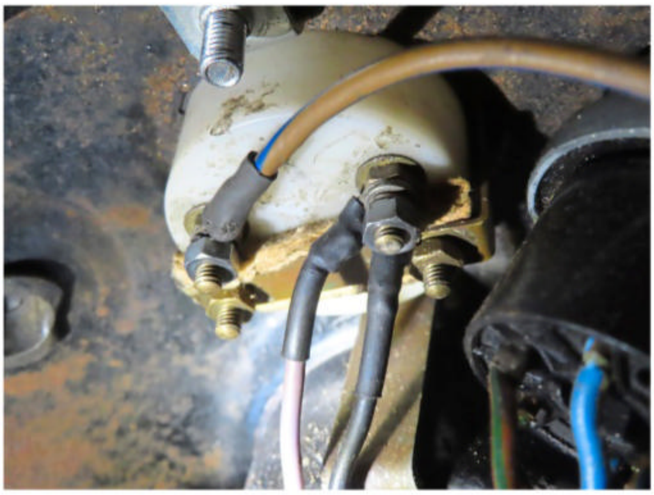
7 Taking charge

Ammeters usefully monitor charging. At (or just above) the midpoint indicates a balance; behind means charge isn't meeting demand, while excessively far above may suggest a regulator fault.

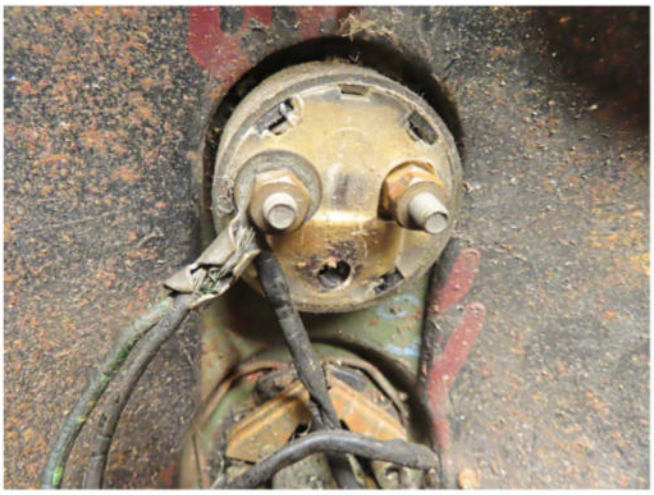
8 Simple checks

Simply turning on the lights with the engine not running will tell you whether the ammeter is working and correctly wired. It should swing to minus or discharge – if reversed, swap the wires over.



9 Two-way traffic

Battery live connects to one terminal (battery positive to negative), the other takes both the generator 'feed' and 'draw' to the switch – so you can see whether power's going into or out of the battery.



10 Bypass the problem

If the ammeter fails and you lose charge, you can cut it out of circuit by joining all the wires to one terminal. Obviously, you won't get a reading – but it should get everything else working again.

11 Keeping tabs

Be careful with ammeters secured by a horsehoe bracket – it can easily touch and short the connections. Originals had tabs on the bezel that fold up to secure the gauge in the headlamp safely.

In the toolbox

BA (British – Science – Association) spanners are needed for ammeters and other electrical components. BA sets are available used, or from around £20 new. Beware of over-tightening ammeter terminals – they can twist and break.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

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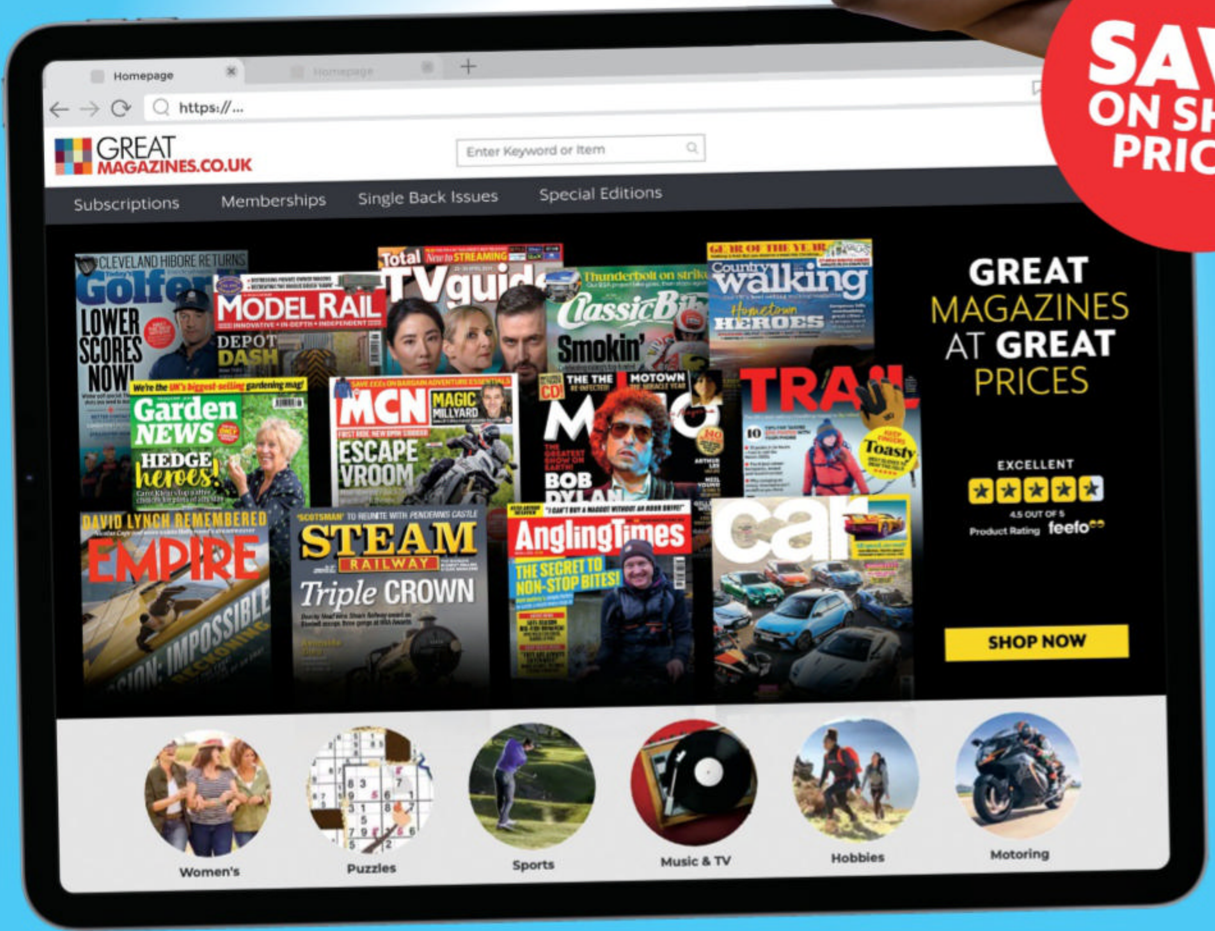
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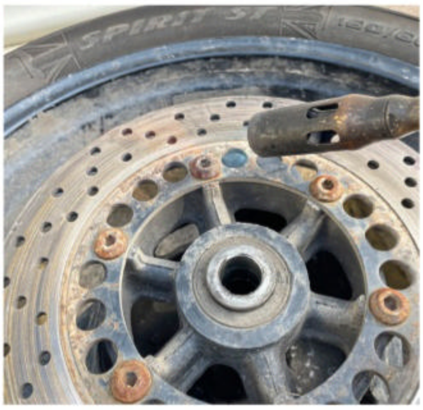
Replacing brake discs

Simply undo the bolts and slap the new ones into position, right? If only. On older bikes it's never straightforward, so here's the way to make sure that swapping your discs is a stress-free experience

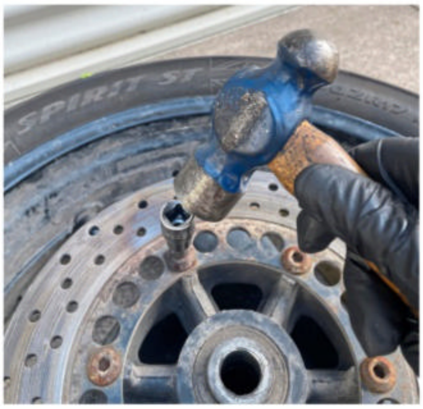
Alan Seeley

"The disc face on the hub has to be scrupulously clean, otherwise the disc will warp and you'll have to do this over again."



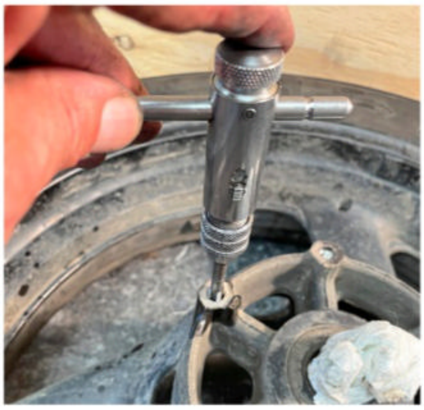
Turn up the heat

You only have to look at the state of these disc bolts to know they aren't going to come out easily. Heat - and plenty of it - will loosen the grip of corrosion and threadlock on the bolts. Break out the gas blowtorch. Work on the bolts one at a time. Keep the flame away from the wheel finish and bearings - and don't skimp on heat. It's easy to round the bolts off if they aren't ready to come out.



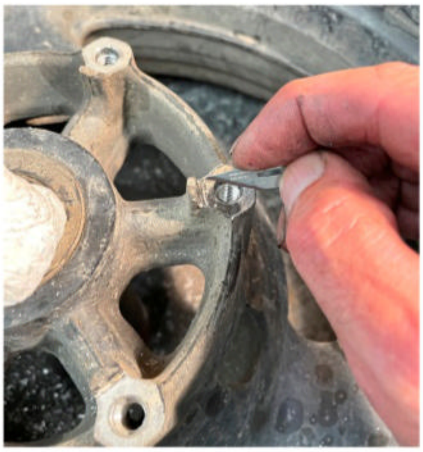
Give it a clout

To make doubly sure that the bolt is ready to move, insert a well-fitting Allen bit into it and give it a couple of robust taps with a hammer. This will serve to further free the threads from one another. Go carefully, though - things are hot. If enough heat has been applied to the bolt, it will quickly conduct into the Allen bit. Keep a rag handy for anything you need to handle.



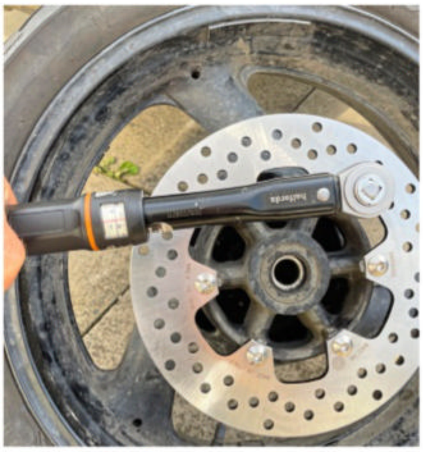
On tap

Having successfully extracted all of the disc bolts and removed the disc itself, it's a good idea to carefully clean up the threads in the hub with an appropriate tap. This will get rid of the old threadlock and any corrosion on the threads. It will ensure that the correct torque is applied when the new disc is fitted. If you're re-using the original disc bolts, thoroughly clean their threads, too.



Scraping by

The disc mating surfaces on the wheel must also be eat-your-dinner-off-them clean. If not, the disc cannot seat correctly and will warp. Corrosion is likely to have built up on the bare aluminium where the disc faces to the hub. In this case, the mating surface hadn't been correctly masked when the wheel was painted. That's probably why the original disc warped. A scalpel blade and a few squirts of brake cleaner will sort it.



Torque to me

Apply a dab of medium-strength threadlock to your new bolts and fit them finger-tight. Final tightening should be done with a torque wrench to prevent warping. Once one bolt is tightened, work on the one opposite it (rather than adjacent) to keep things even. New pads are fitted to the caliper as the ones fitted here were unevenly worn. Remember - it will take several applications of the brake in ordinary riding to bed-in the new disc and pads.

In the toolbox

There's a decent list of essential items, but they're all readily available and won't brake the bank. It comprises: Allen bit and driver, tap and wrench, torque wrench and brake cleaner, plus the blowtorch and hammer.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN SEELEY

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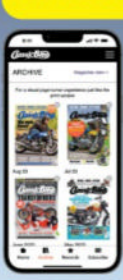

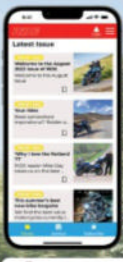

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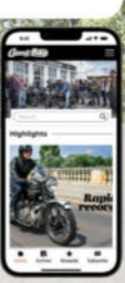

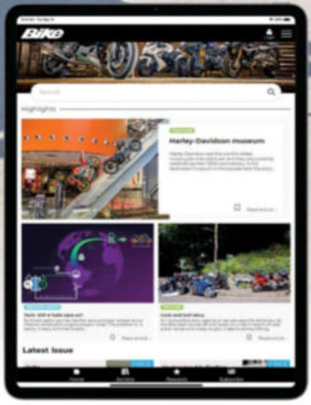

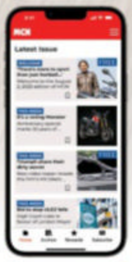

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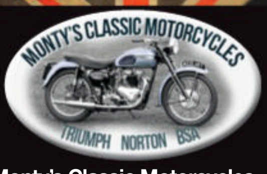

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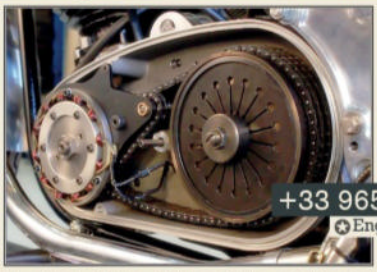

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ARIEL 500 1955, 9000 miles, Showroom condition, tax and MoT exempt, period reg no, stainless steel rims and lots more, spares. **£4750** Monmouthshire Tel:07400564106

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BENELLI SEI 1990, 28800 miles, This fabulous example has recently undergone a careful and thorough engine overhaul and respray, details of the project are featured in a magazine and on a forum, 1 of the last ever made, recent MoT. **£14000** Buckinghamshire Tel:07999772092

BIANCHI BERNINA 1961, 130 miles, Lovely Italian lightweight with only 130 miles since restoration in 2014 and 32 since last MoT in 2017. Now SORN so will need recommissioning. Comes with spare engine, parts list. **£3500** Suffolk Tel:01394411275

BMW R45 1982, 23700 miles, Matching numbers bike with full DVLA HPI summary. Meticulously maintained by BMW Motorrad. Period screen. Twin discs. Powder coated wheels. Keihan stainless exhaust. New clutch &amp; Ikon shocks. **£5500** South Yorkshire Tel:07976254252

BMW K100 1988, 66500 miles, Luggage, spares, garaged, fair condition, 12 months MoT. **£750** Cambridgeshire Tel:07512000210

BMW R1100 1999, 3783 miles, Includes still boxed BMW panniers and rails. All books and keys. Simply perfect, any pictures just ask. **£4500** Cheshire Tel:07980856127

BSA B31 1953, 100 miles, Has been restored to a very good condition, please contact Jerry. **£4000** Essex Tel:07748482179

BSA M21 1953, 3000 miles, Bored out to 705cc with a Harley Davidson top end, stainless steel exhaust, many special parts, all together and running, great ongoing project. **£3500** Somerset Tel:07944597425

BSA B40 1967, 12500 miles, Ex war office, immaculate well sorted bike, fully restored to very good standard in 2023, ready to use, runs really well, ill health forces sale. **£2295** Lancashire Tel:07908623649

BSA FIREBIRD 1969, 12000 miles, Very clean and original, large history file, matching numbers, imported 2004, 4 owners since, regular servicing and MoT's, recent new carbs, electronic ignition, fitted with period indicators. **£6000** London Tel:07986756359

BSA BANTAM 1969, 11000 miles, Refurbished, 3 previous owners, original registration document and V5 in my name, lots of new parts, runs, matching numbers, some things still to be done, please ask for video and pictures. **£2400** Worcestershire Tel:07503038787

BSA BANTAM 1970, 1500 miles, One off, fitted with a Honda CG125 engine and electric start, powder coated frame and swing arm, Knobbly tyres, LED lights and micro indicators, runs well. **£1350** Somerset Tel:07944597425

DUCATI 350 1973, 50000 miles, Nice runner, very clean, no rust, rewired, new battery, new Akront rims, starts well. **£3500** East Sussex Tel:07713601300

DUCATI 900 SS 1994, 4124 miles, Very low mileage, been stored for over 20 years, will need re-commissioning, best offer will be accepted, buyer to collect. **£POA** Hampshire Tel:07539638047

DUCATI 916 BP 1995, 4693 miles, Imported from overseas, been stored for over 20 years, will need re-commissioning, best offer will be accepted, buyer to collect, has good registration plate. **£POA** Hampshire Tel:07539638047

DUCATI 916 BP 1997, 12605 miles, Good condition, MoT and tax'd, kilometre speedo. Termignoni exhaust, Goodrich brake lines. ONO. **£7500** Bristol Tel:07941467043

HONDA 350 1971, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - American import trail, valid V5/NOVA, all original except rear shocks, Boyer Bransden electronic ignition, frame powder coated, excellent example. **£3200** North Yorkshire Tel:07788465300

HONDA GOLDWING 1981, 31000 miles, Tax and MoT exempt, tip top condition, very good runner. **£4800** Leicestershire Tel:07855407421

HUSQVARNA CR 1985, 20 miles, New plastics and decals, powder coated frame, electronic ignition, stainless steel spokes, new tyres. **£7500** Kent Tel:07957633668

LAVERDA 3C 1977, 91377 miles, First registered in UK on 1/3/15, tax and MoT exempt, I'm the only registered UK owner, cost me £8,500 from Made In Italy MCs in 2015, matching numbers, priced to sell. **£6750** Devon Tel:07841407858

HONDA 250 1977, 10000 miles, Good condition, runs ok, historic tax class, I have V5 in my name, this is kick start, easy starter. **£1250** Dorset Tel:07498097834

HONDA CB900 1982, 4400 miles, Historic motorcycle, Great condition. Good paintwork and chrome, no dents or rust. Newly professionally refurbished head, new piston rings and starter mechanism, carbs set up, ONO. **£6700** London Tel:07927833328

KAWASAKI H2 750 1972, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - Rick Brett import, 95% complete. Recent crank and rebore, Wosner pistons, set of Higgspeed spanners and standard exhaust, centre stand. Spare set of crank cases. **£10950** Somerset Tel:07761283877

MALAGUTTI 50 2004, 2000 miles, 3 owners, excellent condition, Red, been stored for many years, on SORN, needs recommissioning, very rare model. **£1000** West Sussex Tel:07962451493

HONDA CB750 1977, 31000 miles, Good condition original condition, with genuine exhausts and luggage rack, new battery, all shiny bits are shiny, knee op forces sale. **£4995** Hampshire Tel:07721025690

HONDA CBX 1984, 6000 miles, V5C, tax and MoT exempt. Good condition. Starts and runs, additional spares bike available. **£1195** Hampshire Tel:07904143377

KAWASAKI GPZ 750 1983, 65000 miles, A good usable classic, all works as it should, MoT and tax exempt. **£2800** Derbyshire Tel:07771718689

MATCHLESS G12 1959, 66362 miles, Very original, good starter with new carb and electronic ignition, lots of Plumstead grunt. **£2950** Hampshire Tel:07815155243

HONDA 400/4 1978, 42449 miles, Priced to sell, it starts, it stops, very tidy and quite rare these days, MoT and tax exempt, owned and garaged for 29 years, owners manual and Haynes manual, some other bits and bobs available. **£2200** Kent Tel:07596958547

HONDA CBX 1984, 1000 miles, 75% complete, additional running Honda CBX 750 F also advertised for sale on site. **£225** Hampshire Tel:07904143377

KAWASAKI GPZ 900 1984, 34700 miles, Fantastic condition, garaged always, original and correct exhausts, starter clutch replaced, one of the best examples you will find, many spares included, OEM front discs etc, please call., GBP, 5500 **£5500** Dorset Tel:07961576727

MONTESA COTA 349 1979, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - 2 stroke, W reg, matching numbers, high quality restoration in mint condition, would suit a collector. **£3250** Northamptonshire Tel:07941763272

HONDA CB250 1978, 93854 miles, Big end bearings, rebuilt engine has done 5000 miles, cylinder barrels, con-rods, cylinder head, pistons, camshaft and valves. Tank, seat, forks and wheels. Historic vehicle. ONO. **£1500** Hertfordshire Tel:07875411159

HONDA VF750 1997, 25000 miles, R reg, excellent condition, new tyres, seat hump, bar risers and lowering link. **£1750** Northamptonshire Tel:07941763272

KAWASAKI KX 1987, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - Total rebuild engine and rolling chassis, nothing neglected, please call for more information. **£6000** Cornwall Tel:07899772354

MOTO GUZZI V50 1990, 31000 miles, Rome Police Escort Bike, 500cc, MoT to September 2025, now on SORN, cheap to run and insure, £800 service before lay up in garage for last two years, reluctant sale due to health issues. **£2000** London Tel:02088647708

HONDA C100 1980, 6248 miles, CB100-N 1980, fully Restored, runs very well, last on road 1986, may deliver Scotland. **£2700** Inverness-shire Tel:07854401246

HONDA CB250 1999, 1998 miles, This is a very rare find, only two owners, fully working, excellent condition, 12 months MoT, dry stored. **£5995** West Yorkshire Tel:07722560345

LAMBRETTA 125 1960, 15000 miles, Original 1960 Italian import from Pisa. Lambretta Li 125 totally rebuilt with the PT works Super Monza engine. Original panels with some scratches and dings. Ultimate sleeper. **£4250** Warwickshire Tel:07961830879

MOTO GUZZI CALIFORNIA 2003, 26000 miles, Very good condition, MoT September, 3 owners. **£3500** West Sussex Tel:07577504926

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BSA

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MV AGUSTA 125 1960, 100000 miles, Fully restored a few years ago, new carb, exhaust etc, ready to go, rides perfectly. **£3695** Cheshire Tel:07769990917

SUZUKI GS650 1982, 9000 miles, Katana, this is probably the best 650 Katana you can find anywhere, It is a UK bike has done less only 9,000 miles from new. (T) **£7750** Kent (T) Tel:01959444441

TRIUMPH TROPHY 1968, 250 miles, Completely restored some years ago before being dry stored since recommissioning. It has only 250 miles on the clock however this will increase with use to fully bed the engine in. **£7500** Kent Tel:07875748672

TRIUMPH DAYTONA 1993, 31000 miles, Very recent Daytona engine rebuild fitted to Trident, with Daytona wheels, less than 1000 miles on rebuilt engine, Hurricane tribute, MoT September, custom paint and modified Trident bodywork. **£2750** Essex Tel:07950435017

NORTON COMMANDO 1969, 1104 miles, First generation Fastback in excellent condition, matching numbers, complete rebuild, new tyres and tubes, Hagon shocks, new carbs, 1104 miles since rebuild, not an import. **£7590** Devon Tel:07708771759

TRIUMPH T110 1959, 14416 miles, Good condition, rides well, for sale by elderly owner, price or nearest offer, for more details please ring. **£4750** West Yorkshire Tel:07711191753

TRIUMPH T100 1970, 6113 miles, Matching engine and frame number, tax and MoT exempt, good original condition. **£7000** West Yorkshire Tel:07469926203

TRIUMPH DAYTONA 2000, 17500 miles, Yellow, recent oil, filter and brake fluid change, new front tyre, price ono. **£2200** Lanarkshire Tel:07712761848

RICKMAN METISSE 1977, 27000 miles, Rebuilt from the ground up, engine refreshed with new cam chain, piston rings, unable to finish, minor jobs needed to complete work, need to empty the garage so realistic asking price. **£5000** London Tel:07976622946

TRIUMPH 5TA 1960, 18649 miles, Amaranth Red 5TA Bathtub. Lovely old bike, really honest and original, Steel Bathtub. New 18D2 distributor fitted, new battery and tyres, runs and rides superb. **£4000** Hampshire Tel:07501084121

TRIUMPH T120 1971, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - 750 engine with Nourish crank and lightened valve springs, not matching numbers, last ran 2022., GBP, 6750 **£6750** Buckinghamshire Tel:07748112572

TRIUMPH T509 2008, 16000 miles, SE paint, Arrow 3/1 performance exhaust, Datatool alarm, new battery and Haynes manual. **£3500** Norfolk Tel:07935308205

SUZUKI GS750 1978, 68927 miles, Private seller, Red, manual, 5 speed, petrol, 750cc, original paint and silencers (more pictures on request), new tyres and brakes. Starts and runs well, very reluctant sale., GBP, 3500 **£3500** Kent Tel:07395649395

TRIUMPH T100 1960, 32850 miles, Triumph Tiger 100SS, with high pipe, old restoration, carbs cleaned and new inners, all round good condition, 1960s bike, no PX or swaps, little fettling to get her spot on. **£5250** Essex Tel:07715213802

TRIUMPH T140 1973, 19000 miles, Starts easily and is a real looker, single carb version of the Bonneville, export model, numbers matching, lots spent on wheels rebuilt with stainless steel spokes, new tyres. **£4995** North Yorkshire Tel:07722447457

VELOCETTE VENOM 1961, 33222 miles, Near concours condition, Akront alloy, alloy tank, MK2 concentric carb, side stand, 12V transistor regulator conversions, indicators fitted. Owned by me for 14 years. **£5800** Hampshire Tel:01794513899

SUZUKI GS1000 1980, 7384 miles, Original exhausts, the bike has just had extensive recommission 1,700 including a new clutch. It is smooth and quiet with a very powerful engine. (T) **£7250** Kent (T) Tel:01959444441

TRIUMPH TIGER CUB 1963, 1234 miles, Lovely condition, Black and Silver. May swap for project. What have you got to offer? **£3250** Hampshire Tel:07501084121

TRIUMPH TRIDENT 1976, 44000 miles, Reconditioned cylinder head, wiring harness replaced, new battery, new discs, new tyres, very good condition. **£7500** Derbyshire Tel:07906502194

YAMAHA XS 650 1981, 17000 miles, Matching numbers, custom seat, LED lights and indicators, 19" rear wheel conversion, V5c, Haynes manual. **£3750** Norfolk Tel:07935308205

SUZUKI GS750 1982, 8300 miles, Good condition, carbs cleaned and overhauled, runs very nicely, new carb/airbox, rubbers fitted, original exhaust - slight dent on the left hand one. **£3750** Wiltshire Tel:07552219787

TRIUMPH BONNEVILLE 1966, 16000 miles, 3rd owner, good condition, matching numbers, many new parts, frame powder coated, tank and mudguards resprayed two pack paint, 7 plate clutch upgrade fitted. **£7000** Suffolk Tel:07400874692

TRIUMPH TROPHY 1991, 1 miles, MILEAGE UNKNOWN - Blue bike in original condition, needs starter clutch, Black one stood, needs recommissioning, lots of spares and luggage included. **£995** Derbyshire Tel:07384162764

YAMAHA V-MAX 1985, 23000 miles, MoT March 2026, full power Canadian import, Supertrapp exhausts, V5C in my name, just had oil and filter etc, will become historic, MoT and tax exempt next year, may take P/X. **£3250** Norfolk Tel:07969510071

Better than a girlfriend

At the age of 78, I'm wondering where my Manx Triton is now. It seems the DVLA don't currently have any record of STD 108D – I wonder if any *CB* readers can shed any light on whether it still exists?

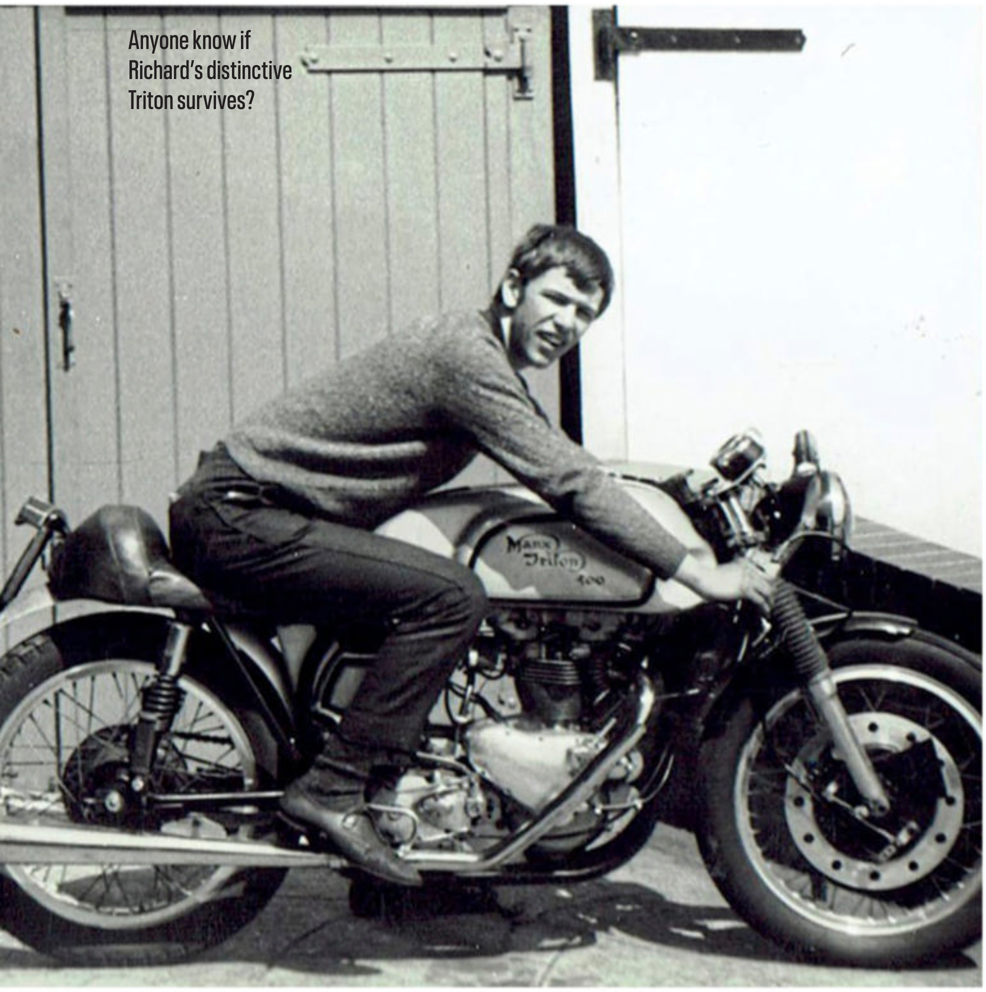
I built it as a young apprentice mechanic, after a visit to Allen and Copson in Ashton-under-Lyne. Bill Copson suggested I could build a Manx Triton out of parts he had – he raced sidecars and offered me the engine out of his outfit as he was upgrading. It was an all-alloy 500cc Triumph engine, highly modified with central spark plug and the head made into a Bonneville-style splayed unit to accept twin carbs.

The gearbox was close-ratio and he found a Manx frame, central oil tank and magnificent five-gallon alloy tank, plus all the parts to complete the bike – all delivered to my house.

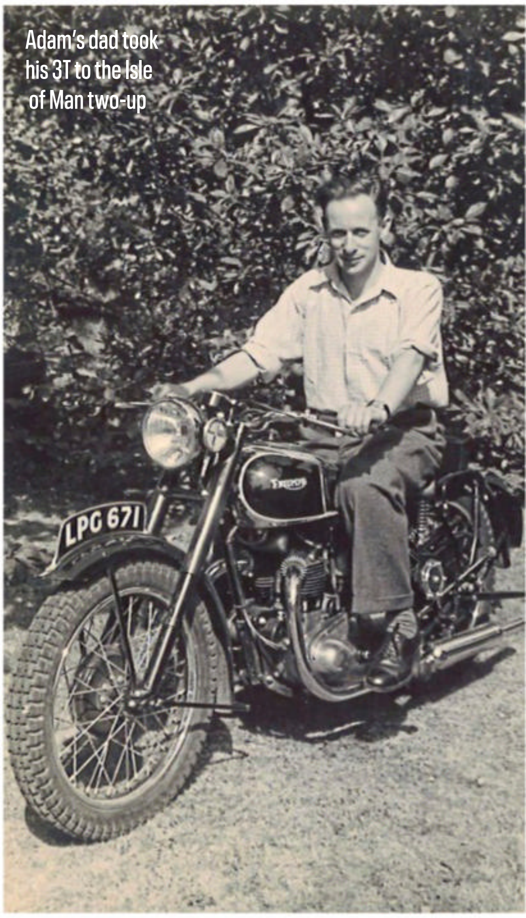
I built it, with distinctive Manx wheels – Borrani rims and a unique Francis Beart twin-lever front brake unit with an alloy heat dissipation disc. It was fantastic to ride, beating my friend's Gold Star on performance and handling.

But then, at the age of 19, I found out about girls and soon realised they did not enjoy riding on the back of dirty, smelly motorbikes – especially on a racing seat. So it had to go and make way for a Mini Cooper, after which I got a girlfriend and drove to Naples that summer. Wish I'd kept the bike rather than the girlfriend...

Richard Dobson,
Newton Stewart, Scotland


Anyone know if Richard's distinctive Triton survives?

RICHARD DOBSON


ADAM FULLER

Adam's dad took his 3T to the Isle of Man two-up

Man machine

The photo above shows my father Brian, proudly showing off his new-to-him Triumph 350 3T in 1949 or 1950.

In 1951, he and mum went to the Isle of Man TT on the bike – riding all the way from home in Surrey to Liverpool for the ferry. Apparently, mum kept nodding off on the back and dad would have to give her a sharp nudge with his elbow to wake her up...

Dad worked with one Johnny Lockett, who, when he wasn't being a scientist at the Coal Research Association, was a works rider for Norton – in 1951 he was in the team with Geoff Duke, so mum and dad took advantage of the end of petrol rationing to go and support him.

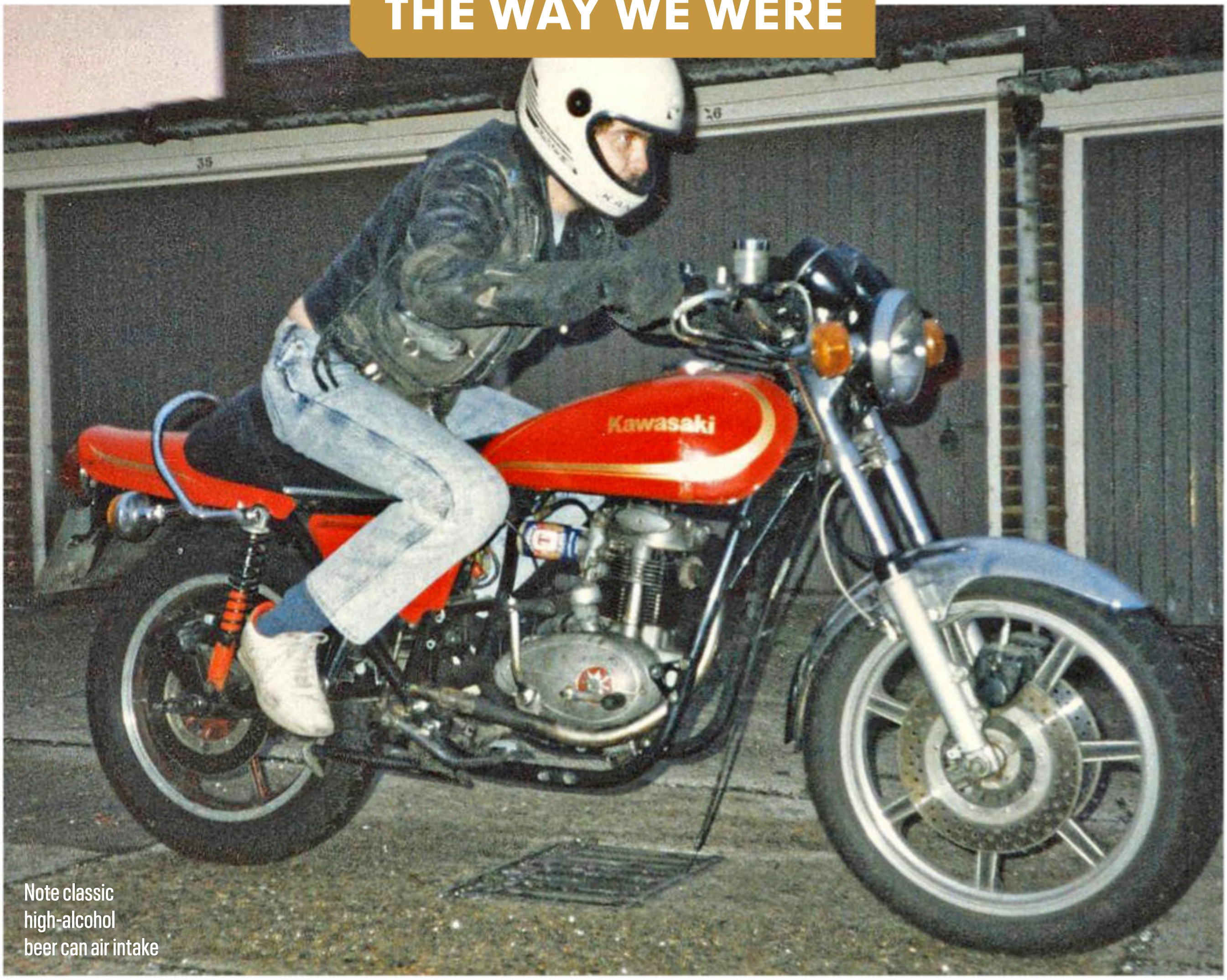
Johnny Lockett was second in the Junior TT but had a DNF in the Senior with a broken chain.

Adam Fuller, London SE19

SHOW US YOUR PHOTOS

Got a photo from back in the day of you showing off your bike? Tell us the story behind it... who you are with, when and where it was taken, and - most importantly - what are your memories of the bike(s) pictured? Share it with CB readers by sending a decent-quality scanned image by email to the address: **classic.bike@bauermedia.co.uk**

CHRIS HARRISON



Note classic high-alcohol beer can air intake

Home-brewed nonsense

Tennent's Super inspired the transplant of a BSA C15 engine into this Z1000

This was the result of a drunken afternoon in the '80s. It was a case of: 'Let's see what we can do and photograph it'. We used to go down to some garages in Plumstead every Saturday morning. There were always bikers down there, including my mate Stuart Dodd and his mate Ian. They had an early Honda CB750 which I jumped on for a ride to Brighton one day. It was my first go on a proper big bike and it terrified me – they all stopped and waited on a flyover for me, because I was riding so slow.

The garages are also the place where I was first properly introduced to the big Kawasaki Zeds – Stuart's Z1000 is what inspired me to get my own Z900 (which I've still got, along with two Z1000s that were both Stuart's bikes… I also have his old VW camper van). We used to go to a lot of the rallies together in the 1980s and 90s, and I'm still in touch with Stuart.

Ian's wife Dawn would bellow up and down Plumstead High Street in her mini skirt and stockings on a Triumph 650 (if I remember correctly), and Stuart would always send me to the corner shop for several cans of Tennent's Super. It was in the blue, red and gold cans – and that's the colour we decided to get our bikes painted. Stuart really wanted his Z1000 in Tennent's colours, but I got my Z900 done first. He wasn't amused.

Anyway, Ian had a BSA C15 that he was doing up in the mid-1980s and one day they decided to do a bit of engine-swapping. The Z1000's hefty inline four wouldn't go in the C15, of course, but the 250cc ohv single-cylinder BSA engine fitted in Stuart's red-and-gold Kawasaki.

Obviously, nothing lined up on this unlikely Frankenstein of a bike – but they went to the effort of making it look like it was working (complete with a Tennent's can for the intake) for some photos, just for a laugh.

Chris Harrison

US INFO• Classic Bike, ISSN 0142-890X (USPS 706770) is published monthly by H Bauer Publishing Ltd, The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London NW1 2PL, United Kingdom. • The US annual subscription price is $89.51. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. • Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. • US Postmaster: Send address changes to Classic Bike, World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. • Subscription records are maintained at Bauer Media, Subscriptions, CDS Global, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 9EF, United Kingdom. • Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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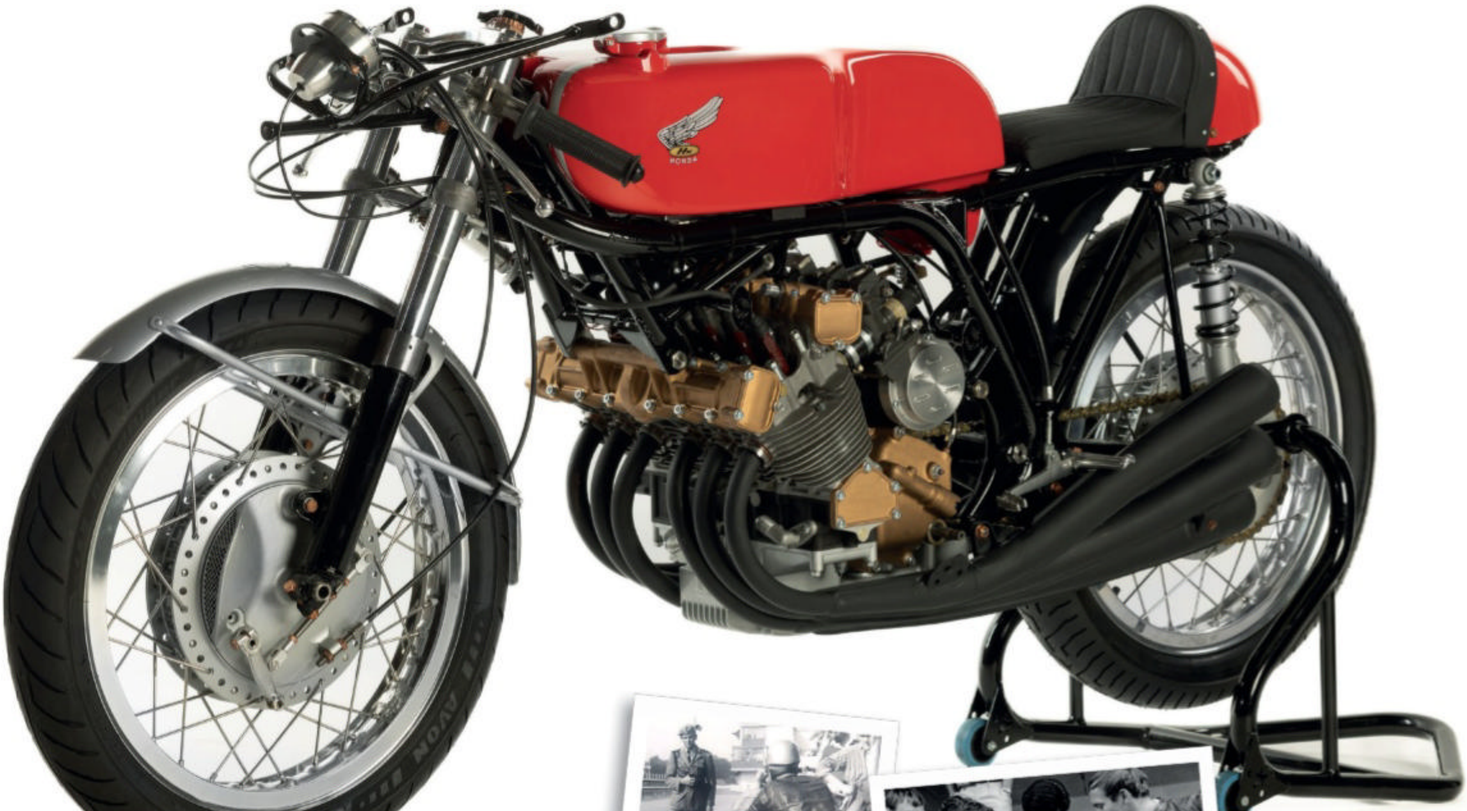

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